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CHRISTIANCOURIER



Part I of II on Christian engagement with Islam

'Why are you here if you hate us?'

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Artist Reba Abdel Ralman highlights the similarities between women of the West and East.

Dena Nicolai

CAIRO, Egypt—Mere days after the horrific events of September 11, 2001, former American President George W. Bush asked in a speech to Congress, "Why do they hate us?" By "they," he meant extremist Muslims, such as those who had carried out the attacks on the World Trade Center, and those who claimed responsibility for it from the mountains of Afghanistan. But for many North Americans, and North American Christians in particular, "they" sounds like Muslims in general.

Nine years later, on a bus in Damascus, Syria, a Muslim woman turned to Amber Blom-Younan, an American working with the Mennonite Central Committee, and asked, "Why are you here if you hate us?" "You" meant Westerners

and "us," Muslims.

Today, both Christians and Muslims are continually confronted by news stories that seem to exemplify the fear, mistrust, and hatred that exists between them. In Germany, a pregnant Muslim woman is stabbed to death in a courtroom after testifying against a man on defamation charges that he called her a "terrorist" and an "Islamist" in a previous incident. In Nigeria, hundreds of Christians are killed by Muslim herdsmen in some of the worst religious clashes in years. In Spain, a girl is expelled from school for wearing a headscarf, while in Egypt local Coptic priests cannot obtain permits even to renovate their churches.

In North America post September 11, there is a continual dialogue regarding Islam and how we

should (if at all) engage it, and the opinions are varied. The debate stirs Christians as well, and the sensitivity of the topic is matched by the strength of emotion attached to it. It remains clear, however, that Christians today must challenge the hatred and misunderstanding on both sides. Though everyone suffers when extremists of any stripe resort to violence, continued hatred, fear, and mistrust cannot be the answer.

Cultivating fear

Within Islam, fundamentalists spread the word that the average Muslim must fear the cultural

messages of the West—messages about immorality, the status of women, sexuality, and so on—that Muslims find offensive. They tell them to be afraid that the West will infiltrate and damage the Muslim *umma* (community). They recall the history of Western imperialism and hegemony in Muslim states, and warn that the West is trying to change their way of life.

In the West, Christians who use the word "danger" to describe Islam talk about a threat to our freedom, our democracy, and our faith—our way of life.

The resulting fear—on both sides—denies the other's humanity and leads to questions like "Why do they hate us?" Muslims turn Christians into symbols of a "crusading West,"



Marounite Church beside the Muhammad al-Amin Mosque in Beirut.

and we in turn look at all Muslims as "radical terrorists." As Christians, See **Engagement** on page 2

Self-appointed saviours: International aid through adoption

Stephanie Tombari

PORT-AU-PRINCE, Haiti—On January 29, 10 American missionaries were detained by Haitian authorities for attempting to cross the border into the Dominican Republic

*If a natural disaster
happened in Canada,
we wouldn't think of...
sending our children away.*

~Kristen DeRoo Vanderberg, CRWRC



American missionaries charged with child kidnapping wait to fly home after being released from jail.

with a busload of 33 children. At the time, the missionaries claimed all 33 kids had been orphaned in the earthquake, but then later admitted they were trying to "rescue" the children, 20 of whom they said had been handed over willingly by their parents.

The well-being of Haiti's children has been at the centre of discussions on how best to help Haiti in its recovery. Many well-intended Canadians and Americans have flooded adoption agencies with offers to adopt, only to be frustrated by unreturned calls and bewildered by Haiti's seeming reluctance to make international placement priority. But is adoption really the best way to help children affected by disaster?

Matt Van Geest and his wife Esther adopted their daughter Gab- See **Adoption** on page 2

News

Engagement *continued*

we should work to move past typical Orientalist and Western stereotyping of Muslims (and often Arabs in general). These stereotypes only serve to heighten mistrust, as we simultaneously turn Muslims into caricatures and accuse them of inciting hatred without considering our own role in propagating fear and misunderstanding.

The sad fact is that the fundamentalists themselves – those who twist religion to suit their means – feed off our fear. What would they do, where would they go, and who would they gather to their ranks if they could not scare and provoke us? And if we are afraid, do we not have more to fear than Islam? These are some of the questions we must ask ourselves if we seek to move beyond where we are now.

The plank in our own eyes

I live in Cairo, a city of 16 million people, most of whom are Muslims. I walk the streets in safety, even as a woman alone, as I have



Women in Nigeria lament at grave in Jos after riots.

walked the streets of other Muslim Arab nations as well. My experience has been that the vast majority of Muslims are peaceful people, inasmuch as the vast majority of Christians are peaceful. They are not interested in killing Christians, or committing violence against Westerners. However, in the minds of many Christians, these peaceful Muslims are the exception. Yet, when Christians commit violence and justify it with Scripture, we call them the exceptions.

Before deciding whether or not Islam promotes peace, we have to consider whether or not Christianity promotes peace. This leads to historical nuances, such as Just War theory, and examples like the Spanish Inquisition, the Bible verses inscribed on American military firearms, and the role of Christianity and the Crusades in the Middle Ages. And for every Christian who says, "The Crusades and those who kill abortion doctors do not represent true Christianity," there is a Muslim who says, "Al Qaeda is not Islam" and "We do not claim Osama Bin Laden as our own."

We must also take care when using Qu'ranic verses to generalize about Islam or Muslims as a whole. Verses can be taken from the Qur'an and the Bible to justify almost anything, if one knows where to look. For example, couldn't someone use the book of Joshua to arrive at a distorted view of how Christians look at God?

As Philip Jenkins, a professor in the department of History and Religious Studies at Penn State University in Pennsylvania, argues, "to say that terrorists can find religious texts to justify their acts does not mean that their violence actually grows from these scriptural roots. Indeed, such an assumption itself is based on the crude fundamentalist formulation that everything in a given religion must somehow be authorized in scripture. . . . If Christians or Jews want to point to violent parts of the Koran and suggest that those elements taint the whole religion, they open themselves to the obvious question: what about their own faiths?"

On the defensive

Today, books and narratives (by authors such as Mark Gabriel or Wafa Sultan) are popular within some Western Christian circles. I can't deny the validity of stories and narratives such as Sultan's, but we must also ask ourselves if we would want a Muslim's primary image of Christianity to come from, for example, a Christian convert to Islam or a former Christian who had left the faith altogether.

Narratives such as Sultan's, as valuable as they may be within a certain context, often add to Muslims' feelings that the West "hates" them.

"We speak cheerfully about Islam being the next great threat (or alternately the next great mission field) now that the Communist world has disintegrated, but how does that sound to our Muslim neighbours?" writes Dr. Jonathan Ingleby, Head of Mission Studies

Trust me, I do realize that defending Islam today is like defending Christianity in the Middle Ages.

~Mustafa Akyol,
a Turkish journalist and Muslim



Mosque and church

at Redcliffe College in England.

It is no wonder that, as one Catholic priest in Jerusalem points out, "Islam still lives in a situation where it feels attacked and aggressed – it is always in a situation of self-defence." When Westerners in Cairo engage in dialogue with Muslims in Egypt or other Muslim nations, they often find themselves solely listening, as their Muslim counterparts assume that before engaging in two-way conversation it is necessary to defend themselves against assumed Western stereotypes. While this is explicable, the defensive attitude that is created by misunderstandings prevents true conversation and makes it even more difficult to form authentic relationships.

In order for any true dialogue to take place, both sides must move past stereotypes and fear into a place of honest conversation, where the question is no longer "Why do you hate us?" but is instead, "I see you as a real person. Now where do we go from here?"

Dena Nicolai (dena.nicolai@gmail.com) lives and works in Cairo, Egypt. She is originally from Edmonton. For those interested in learning more about Christian-Muslim relations, she recommends Colin Chapman's *Cross and Crescent: Responding to the Challenge of Islam. Part II of this series, Be Not Afraid: Embracing the Muslim 'Other,'* will be in the May 24 issue.



Cairo street scene

Adoption *continued*

riela while working in Haiti. "The rush for people in Canada and the US to be motivated to adopt Haitian children after the earthquake caused a bit of an emotional earthquake for us, having already adopted a baby in Haiti in 2006," says Van Geest. "On the one hand we quickly made our own inquiries since we had talked about adopting another child. On the other hand, we were a bit blown away by what we felt like was a rushed response to an extremely complex problem."

Limiting good intentions

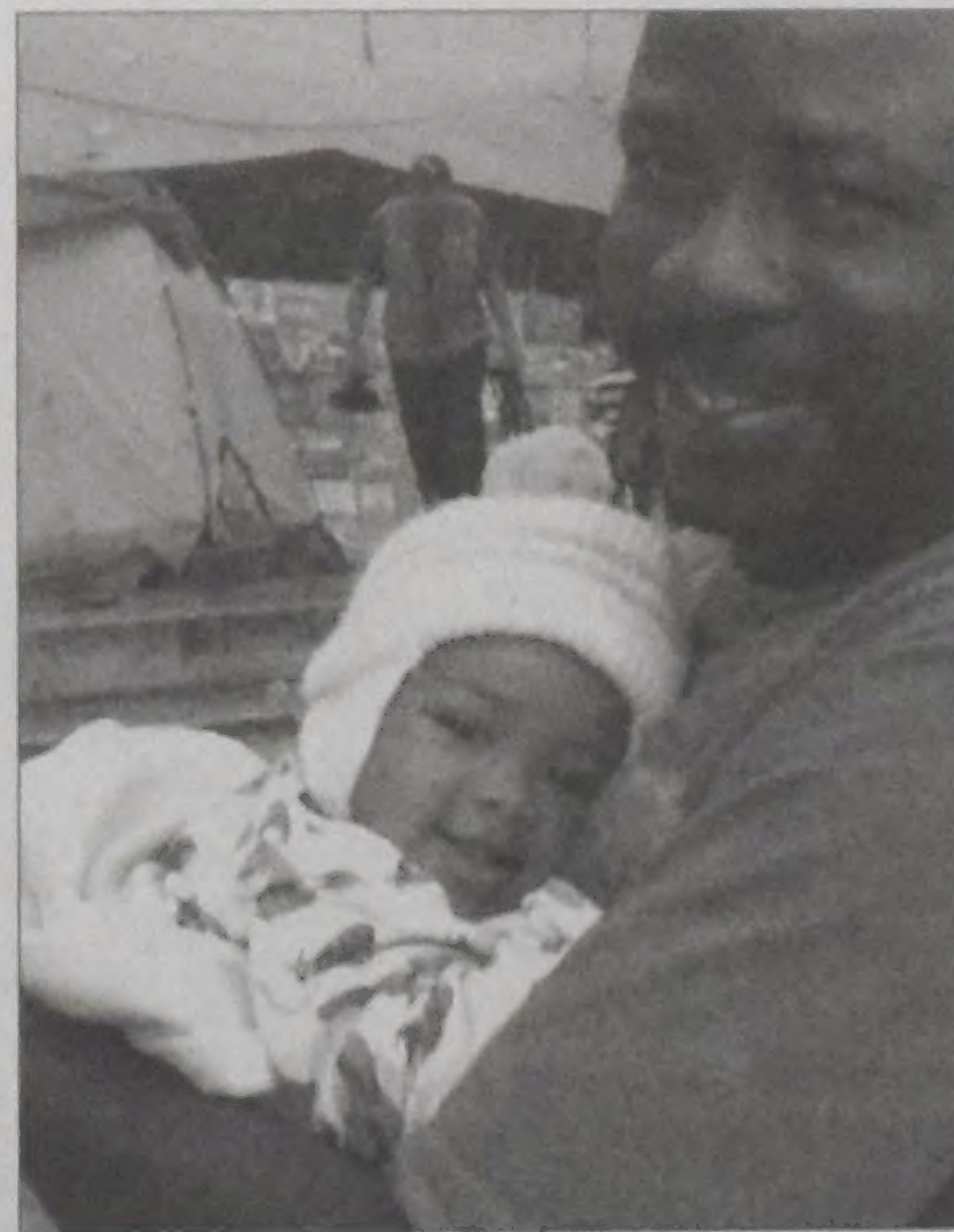
Adoption itself can be complex, but in the greater number of cases for good reason. The province of Ontario has strict regulations regarding international adoption in large part to avoid corruption at the expense of children. Only agencies licensed by the Government of Ontario are permitted to facilitate adoptions on behalf of Ontario residents. Mission of TEARS is the sole agency in the province licensed to facilitate Haitian adoptions, which had approximately 10 adoptions in process at the time the earthquake hit. According to its website, the agency was not taking any new applications for Haiti in the foreseeable

future. An additional 100 adoptions were in process by Canadians in other provinces.

Though Citizenship and Immigration Canada made a move to expedite adoptions from Haiti by family members and families with adoptions already in progress, the Canadian government – in accordance with the Hague Convention on Protection of Children and Co-operation in Respect of Inter-country Adoption of 1995 – has long held the policy that reconstruction and rehabilitation, not mass immigration, is the best way to aid countries in times of disaster.

'Respect disaster survivors'

Development and disaster organizations with a long-term presence in Haiti, such as the Christian Reformed World Relief Committee (CRWRC), agree. "If a natural disaster happened in Canada, we wouldn't think of shipping people out to a new country or sending our children away to be adopted elsewhere," says Kristen DeRoo Vanderberg, CRWRC communications manager. "CRWRC believes that that same mentality should hold true in other countries. We need to respect disaster survivors as



A proud father in Port-au-Prince.

CHRISTINA DEJONG

image bearers of God and capable of being involved in rebuilding their country. Our task is to come alongside them and provide the assistance they need to rebuild communities, restore livelihoods, and care for orphans on their own."

Unfortunately the best option – staying with family or being adopted within a country of birth – is not always possible, which is why international adoption has become important in helping to ensure the being of all children. "I think everyone would agree that keeping Haitian children in Haiti, with their families, or an extended version of their families, is the ideal situation," says Van Geest. "That is not always possible, as many families are already stretched with their resources – even more so after the earthquake."

"The whole world is at Haiti's doorstep wanting to help, but I don't think everyone's motives are good and in each case need to be evaluated and checked for integrity," says Christina DeJong, who travelled to Haiti in April for CRWRC. "If children are to be adopted away from Haiti, following a legal process is important and respectful."

Stephanie Tombari (contact@stephanietombari.com) is a writer and an adoptive parent. Her son Noah Jae was born in South Korea and in her heart.



News

Michigan farmer wins 'Green Nobel'

Yvonne Zipp

CLAYTON, MICHIGAN (CSM) – On April 19, Lynn Henning became one of the 2010 winners of the Goldman Environmental Prize, sometimes called the Green Nobel, the largest prize in the world given to grass-roots environmentalists. How this grandmother and farmer's wife became a self-taught bane to local CAFOs (concentrated animal-feeding operations) is a story 10 years in the making.

"What struck the jury was that her leadership addressed one of the most serious and least-talked-about issues in our country today," says Lorrae Rominger, deputy director of the Goldman Prize in San Francisco.

This is the first time the \$150,000 prize has been awarded to someone battling CAFOs. The jury was very concerned about "the water and air pollution that comes from these factory farms and how they are making people sick," Rominger says.

Henning has spent much of her life helping her husband on their 80-acre farm in Clayton, a small town in south-central Michigan. Today, 20,000 cows are within a 10-mile radius of her home, and another 20,000 hogs cycle through on an annual basis. (Before the CAFOs, there were about 500 animals in the same area, she says.)

Waste from one cow equals that produced by 23 humans. That waste is washed into lagoons that hold millions of gallons, where it is stored for months before being spread on fields.

The smell, even in early March, is nearly overpowering. "It's industrial agriculture using family farms as a disguise," Henning says. "Manure is no longer manure – it's toxic waste." And it needs to be treated as such, she says, not spread untreated on fields or allowed to wash into local water sources. "I used to love spring," Henning says. Now, "I hate spring."

Henning became concerned about CAFOs a decade ago. She started filing federal Freedom of Information Act requests, and as she learned more she became more alarmed.

Then in 2003, her in-laws, who had farmed in Clayton their whole lives, were diagnosed with hydrogen-sulfide poisoning. Their doctor said it was his opinion that the poisoning came from the local cow husbandry operations and manure lagoons.

In 2000, Henning and other local residents founded a group, ECCSCM (Environmentally Concerned Citizens of South Central Michigan), to monitor the CAFOs.

"We could either fight or pack up," she says. "We've been here too long to leave."

With the help of Light Hawk, a volunteer group of pilots, ECCSCM has taken aerial photos of CAFOs since 2001. The flights have led to 1,077 reported violations. The state of Michigan has collected more than \$1.4 million in fines from CAFOs in south-central Michigan.

In 2008, State Line hog farm was shut down after ECCSCM found that the surrounding air quality had up to 9 parts per million of hydrogen sulfide. "Ten parts will cause unconsciousness," Henning says dryly.

Despite these victories, Henning says not enough has changed. "I think it's going to get worse before it gets better," she says.

She plans to use some of the prize money to buy an air-quality monitor.

Henning matter-of-factly recounts a list of harassments and lawsuits against her that stretches back for years:

Being chased by manure tankers down the road; having dead animals left in her driveway and car; and having her mailbox blown up.

On Dec. 30, someone shot out the window of her granddaughter's bedroom with buckshot. The two-year-old was in the room at the time.

Environmentalists are sometimes accused of being anti-farming, but Henning says she's different.

"They have a hard time with me because I am a farmer," she says. "I drive a tractor."



Senate reform at last?



Principalities & Powers

David T. Koyzis

Nearly two months ago Prime Minister Harper introduced a bill to limit the terms of Senators to eight years. This is part of a larger agenda to reform Canada's upper chamber, which remains an appointive body almost 150 years after Confederation. The Fathers of Confederation famously intended the Senate to be a "chamber of sober second thought" whose task it would be to scrutinize legislation coming from the Commons and possibly prevent a popular, but ill-considered policy from taking effect.

At that time, of course, Canada was not a democracy in the full sense. The right to vote varied from province to province, and it was usually limited to male property owners. However, as more people gained the vote and as the Commons became more actively representative of ordinary people, the undemocratic nature of the Senate became more evident. Hence the calls for reform of the Red Chamber which have echoed throughout the country throughout the 20th and into the 21st centuries.

The trouble is that, although no one appears to like the Senate as is, we cannot agree on what to do with it. Québec provincial governments have tended to favour abolition, as have many New Democrats. There is precedent for this, as New Zealand abolished its upper chamber in 1951 and Québec its own *Salon Rouge* in 1968. However, many western Canadians would like to see a triple-E Senate, that is, one that is elected, effective and equally representative of each province.

Canada is one of the few federal systems in the world lacking an upper chamber representing the states or provinces as political units. Each state of the United States sends two senators to its Senate. The Australian Senate represents the 6 states to the tune of 12 senators a piece. The German states are not equally represented in the *Bundesrat*, but the smaller states are overrepresented relative to their proportion of the country's total population.

There is a way

Because Harper has a minority government, he is seemingly limited in his efforts to reform the Senate. Or is he? Writing for the *Toronto Star*, John Ward opined that direct election of Senators "likely would require a full-blown constitutional amendment." Not necessarily. We could provide by ordinary statute for the election of senators, in which case they would be appointed formally by the Governor General in Council, yet on the advice, not of the Prime Minister, but of the electorate of each province. This would in no way necessitate a change in the relevant section 24 of the *Constitution Act, 1867*, which would remain in place. Nevertheless, we would effectively have an elected Senate.

Alternatively, given that the Prime Minister possesses the prerogative powers of the Crown, he might be able to act without the support of the other parties in Parliament and without statutory reform. Harper could simply allow the provinces to poll their own voters and then appoint the winners to the relevant seats. Since such appointments are entirely up to him, he could possibly set the machinery in motion without having to consult the opposition parties. However, the provinces would have to provide a statutory basis for such elections.

To be sure, Harper would not necessarily be formally and legally bound by their results. But for him to go against the expressed wishes of a provincial electorate would be politically dangerous for any sitting prime minister. It might be worth a try.



David T. Koyzis teaches political science at Redeemer University College, Ancaster, Ontario, and blogs at: <http://firstthings.com/blogs/evangel/>.

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Editorials

Pedalling alternatives



Angela Reitsma Bick

Our household shares one car, which means our daughters know how to get around the neighbourhood without it. We often walk to church or take the bus downtown. As soon as the snow gave up its stranglehold on sidewalks in Barrie, the girls took off on tricycles and training wheels. Life would probably be easier with two vehicles – like last week, when our car sat at the mechanics and its summer tires forgotten at home. As I ran through ways to get four tires ten kilometres without a car, our five-year-old piped up: “I think I can roll one tire on the bus if you take two.” When she started calculating how many tires would fit per stroller, I called a friend and borrowed her van.

CBC radio gave a fitting news update as we drove. Toronto is attempting to wean itself off a car-dependent culture, or at least that’s my interpretation. The Public Works Committee has just passed several bike-friendly initiatives, including a bike-rental program and over 40 km of new bike-only routes. It’s another encouraging sign that North America is finally catching up to Europe, where bicycles have long been integrated into city life. Last May, Montreal launched Bixi, North America’s largest bike-sharing system: 5000 publicly owned bikes accessible with a credit card at 400 depots. Bixi mimics systems in the world’s most bicycle-friendly cities, like Berlin and Copenhagen.

In Amsterdam, 40 percent of the population travels each day by bike. It’s about time for Canadian politicians to acknowledge that a culture of urban bicycling results in healthier people and less traffic.

The bicycle is the most efficient machine ever created: Converting calories into gas, a bicycle gets the equivalent of three thousand miles per gallon. ~ Bill Strickland

Conflicting agendas

Not everyone agrees, however. At the Public Works meeting in Toronto April 20, there was at least one dissenter.

“The CAA has some serious safety concerns,” said Faye Lyons of the Canadian Automobile Association (CAA). Lyons worried that the new bike lanes will actually increase congestion in Toronto as car space decreases.

Well, maybe it will. Maybe at first. But if it does, won’t

those empty bike lanes – in winter even cleared by city snow ploughs – look all the more appealing? Change has to start somewhere, and a top-down approach may be needed here to counteract the self-serving disapproval of corporations. Many past bike-sharing programs, most famously the White Bicycle Plan in Amsterdam in the 1960s, were crippled by theft, vandalism and expenses greater than the income from rental fees. As systems evolve, government funding can be crucial to help establish and encourage cycling within cities.

You may have heard of the infamous buggy whip manufacturers, who – at the turn of the 20th century – saw their doom in the headlights of oncoming automobiles. First, powerful buggy whip barons tried to outlaw cars. When that didn’t work, they tried to make it illegal to drive a motor vehicle without a whip. Without horses, however, that particular carrot was not needed. The law was never passed, and some very wealthy men suddenly had smaller pockets.

Profit-driven

The CAA’s reaction to a modest expansion of Toronto’s bike lanes echoes the protests of those buggy whip manufacturers. CAA profits from congestion: gas consumption, breakdowns, and even accidents fuel its bottom line. Their US counterpart works the same way. The American Automobile Association (AAA), now 108 years old, seems like a beacon of integrity – a reliable, well-known saviour for stranded travellers. But did you know that AAA members’ dues bolster its lobbying power against vehicle-emissions standards such as the Clean Air Act? Both companies’ policies have long supported road building and tried to forestall mass transit, bike lanes and oil drilling limits. At one point, AAA even opposed the legislation of mandatory air bags (Ken Silverstein, *Harper’s Magazine*).

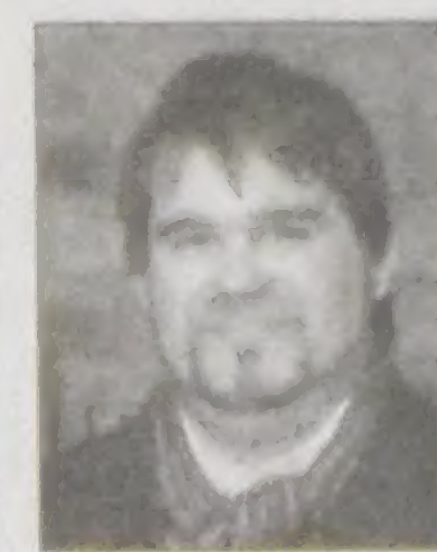
Our government spends roughly four times as much on road construction and maintenance than on public transit. If leaders, egged on by the Automobile Associations, continue to focus on fossil-fuel driven systems, it betrays a limited kind of thinking. The buggy whip manufacturers clung to a piece of leather rather than consider what would become essential in the automobile. There’s always a carrot, even if something replaces the horse. Like a five-year-old coming up with three ways to get downtown, we need to tweak our usual patterns of thinking. Familiar problems can be solved with creative solutions, but corporations with a vested interest in the status quo will rarely help raise viable alternatives.

Christ was no copycat

Have you ever read CAA’s magazine, *Lifestyle, Travel and Cool Car Stuff*? The “5 easy ways to greenify your ride” are all maintenance tips, services available at CAA’s Approved Auto Repair Facilities. It reminds me of Kraft Canada’s recipes, which are laden with brand name products in startling capitals. There’s KRAFT Tex Mex Mac’N’Cheese or JELL-O Fruity Pie. Even the Moroccan Fish makes use of PHILADELPHIA’S Herbed Cream Cheese. It’s shameless advertising, of course, but even worse is how it tries to narrow the reader’s vision. The recipes stamp out creativity by limiting your choices to pre-approved, branded ingredients.

Christians are called to be discerning, which includes realizing that stuffing existed before STOVE TOP, and that CAA does not do urban planning objectively. We are called to heal our bodies and the earth, and that might include the support of bike-friendly legislation in our cities. Like the buggy whip makers and the Automobile Associations, the Pharisees in Jesus’ time tried to fight the change he represented. Rather than hang on to the status quo, let’s follow in our true Saviour’s rule-breaking, boundary-stretching footprints. Non-members welcome. ☞

Yesterday is tomorrow: teens in Canada



Brett Alan Dewing

In September, as part of my work with Living Waters Canada, I read Reginald Bibby’s book, *The Emerging Millennials*, which summarizes the findings of a 2008 survey of Canadian teenagers.

The intent of the survey (and the book which publishes its results) was to get a true snapshot of the beliefs and priorities of the country’s teens. There is a ton of interesting, though not particularly surprising, material there, but I was most interested in the sexual views of Canada’s teenagers. Just how far gone are they, I wondered. Bring on the bad news.

Teen sex stats

Bibby has been conducting these surveys regularly for decades, but the trends of today’s youth meant that the survey needed to expand its multiple choice options relating to moral viewpoint from “Approve” and “Disapprove” to also include “Disapprove but Accept.” (This third attitude he christens “The Canadian Way.”)

In the area of sexuality, many of Bibby’s findings were surprising. For instance, the results led to these stats on teens in Canada regarding their approval of various sexual practices:

- Premarital sex when people love each other
 - 72% approve, 19% disapprove but accept, and only 9% disapprove and do not accept.
- Premarital sex when people “like” each other
 - 38% approve, 37% disapprove but accept, 25% disapprove and don’t accept.
- Extramarital sex
 - 5% approve, 17% disapprove but accept, 78% disapprove and don’t accept.
- Sexual relations between two people of the same sex
 - 44% approve, 28% disapprove but accept, 28% disapprove and don’t accept.

While these numbers start out as expected (less than a tenth of teens stand up against premarital sex), they slowly become more conservative (more than 2/3 do not accept adultery in any form). While they may still be depressing, the numbers of those who accept same-sex activity are surprisingly low for today’s youth culture. Even stranger, the number of teenagers who approve of gay marriage are higher than those who approve of gay sex. That leaves a group of people who would gladly see two men marry but who would disapprove of them consummating that marriage.

What is truly revealing, though, is the relation these moral attitudes have to actual teen practice. Across the board, what Bibby’s statistics show is that, while today’s teenagers are more accepting of sexual activity, teen sexual activity has actually declined in the past decade, and the number of teenage virgins has increased. Teens are not very likely to engage in sex outside of what they view to be a love relationship. Students in “religious” schools and those who are regularly involved in a religious community have traditionally conservative sexual mores and are much less likely to engage in sex.

Overall, while acceptance for sexual practices has risen, today’s teens are less sexually active than their parents were at their age. Accordingly, the future plans of today’s youth are of traditional marriage and childrearing. Most believe that they will marry only once, and more than 80% want children.

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Canada

News

What do you think?

This month we ask our readers to elaborate on the following question,
"What is your experience with and opinion of church discipline?"

Please send your letters of response to Bert Witvoet via
bert.witvoet@sympatico.ca.

1 gas tank = 1 year of food

In "CFGB feeds its gas tank and the world" (CC March 22), Emily Wierenga says that "...it takes the same amount of grain to fill an SUV with ethanol as it does to feed a person." A reader wondered how long that person would be fed for – one meal, one day, one week?

Wierenga wrote back with this clarification: "Kurt Klein, professor of agricultural economics at the University of Lethbridge, says the amount of corn it takes to produce 75 litres of ethanol (roughly a tank of fuel) is enough corn to feed one person on a 2,000-calorie-a-day diet for a year." ➤

Yesterday is tomorrow *continued from page 4*

Hope and challenge

I am greatly encouraged by these findings. It seems that the attitude teens project is not always what they truly feel and that what they accept is not necessarily what they believe. There is more hope for them than many of us thought.

The bad news, though, is that, even where sexual mores are not as abandoned as we may have thought, religious awareness is. Notice, I didn't say religious belief. It seems that 68% of Canadian teens identify with a religious tradition, and 63% see the overall impact of organized religion on Canada to be positive. (The number drops to only 48% when the impact of religion on the world at large is considered.)

No, it is the lack of basic religious knowledge that shocks me. In answering Bibby's questions, only 30% of Canadian teens knew that the sacred text of Islam is the Koran, 10% knew Abraham was the founding father of Judaism, and 22% could name Peter as the man who denied Christ. Not encouraging numbers for a multi-cultural country.

Another interesting facet of Bibby's findings is that while they value trust very highly, teens are pretty cynical about certain

instances of trust. Only 31% believe that lawbreakers are almost always apprehended. Half of teens agree that when a stranger shows concern "they're up to something." As many as 53% feel that "you can't be too careful in dealing with others."

A change of attitude

But enough statistics. What do they all mean? In my opinion, they show that we don't need to be quite as panicked over the sexual choices of our children and grandchildren. In most cases, we merely need to realize that a teenager can express acceptance of something while still disapproving of it and that, while pressured to accept most things, they are not likely to pursue them.

What we do need to focus on is the more general picture: what is religion? what makes one different from another? and what does faith change about how we relate to others? It seems that teens are happy to follow tradition, but they are ignorant of what that tradition involves.

Simply put, if we approach them without fear and distrust, we might be able to tell them a thing or two they actually don't know – and they might even want to know it! ➤

Compassion and love must drive us

Before readers read my response to Mr. Antonides' article "Never again, Again?" (CC April 12), I want to stress that I support unconditionally the protection of the State of Israel according to the United Nations accord that supports and protects the independence of the State of Israel since 1948.

Mr. Antonides begins his column by mentioning the worldwide response to the terrible Nazi-German persecution of the Jews. Indeed, let it never happen again. I have no difficulty joining him in this statement, but I have great difficulty with his attack on the Arab-Muslim enemies, who, according to him, try to "wipe Israel off the map." I am against his wholesale use of the two words Arab and Muslim.

What I don't like about Mr. Antonides' article is the spirit of hatred against the Muslim Arab world. We have to become better acquainted with Muslims, especially Arab Muslims. May I remind us all that the God of the Muslim world, Allah, is the same God we share with all Jews and Christians, and those who don't know him the world over. Though they, the Jews and Muslims, do not accept Jesus, they are still our neighbours.

The greatest difficulty I have with this article is that many of Antonides' claims are questionable. First: Israel has continually claimed to be God's chosen people over against the rest of humanity. To take this attitude is abusive. All human beings are born in the image and likeness of God, our Creator. Many people don't accept this, but it is a biblical given. God's choice of Israel was to form her into a nation of ambassadors of reconciliation. This role of reconciliation was taken over by the Christian Church, but we failed badly.

Secondly, Israel is not as democratic as it claims to be. Often the Arab citizens of Israel cannot vote or become a candidate for their own party. In addition, many children born in Israel to Thais and Philipinos, who have taken over jobs formerly held by Palestinians, can never become citizens. Only Jews can

become citizens of the Republic of Israel.

Thirdly, the Gospel of Jesus Christ cannot be preached in Israel. The Muslims have a bit more freedom due to the high number of Muslims living in Israel. Israel is by its very nature anti-Christian.

What kind of witness?

I tend to agree with President Obama and his two main officials that Israel is indeed the biggest stumbling block to peace in the Middle East. Mr. Antonides states that Israel "is unwilling to surrender any more of its tiny territory and to have its population expand by a few million Palestinians who demand 'their right to return.'" This is not true, not even reality. Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu is eager to build 1600 homes for Israeli settlers not only in the West Bank, but also many more in East Jerusalem, which is part of the territory given to the Palestinians in 1948.

David Frum wrote that York University would not allow campus group Christians United for Israel to schedule a program of pro-Israel speakers in late February. My question is: Was this Christian campus group seeking to proclaim Jesus, the Christ, as the new Adam, or was this a political Christianized attempt to silence the voice of the Arab Muslims? There are also many Muslims on campus. Over the 18 years I served as campus minister, I have made many friends, who knew me as a follower of Jesus, the Christ. I have seen many Palestinians, Canadian Christians and a few Jewish students begin to understand the transformation God is bringing about in the 21st Century. However, too many of us still live the spirit of modernity with its structured lines of demarcation and limitations. I do stand for law and order, but also for justice and hospitality. Remember, we are Christ's witnesses here and elsewhere. Compassion and love are the driving forces that move us.

Aren P. Geisterfer
Gatineau, Quebec

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Columns



The Mother's Day message; the Father's Day sermon

I have heard some beautiful Mother's Day messages.

I have heard women lifted up and praised. I have heard the virtues of motherhood extolled. I have heard sympathetic and understanding homilies about the difficulty women face in a challenging and changing world. I have heard modern mothers favourably compared to Mary – to whom Christ first revealed himself after his resurrection. And the Mother's Day message typically concludes with an exhortation to everyone to love and appreciate our mothers more.

To which I always say a hearty "amen" – and resolve to pick up the phone more often.

Then, there is the Father's Day sermon.

The Father's Day sermon – if there is one at all – is nothing like the Mother's

Day message. The lesson is not that we should appreciate our fathers more, but rather that they should treat us better. Father's Day isn't an opportunity to tell them how much we love them, it's a chance to tell them to straighten up and fly right. Fathers get compared, inevitably, to our Heavenly Father – an impossible and unfair competition – and so, they are always falling short.

Typically, when I leave a Father's Day service, I do not feel uplifted. I feel scolded.

Seesaw change

What has happened?

When it comes to fathers, something has changed – which isn't to say that things used to be better. Because, for women, they weren't. But things were different not all

that long ago, for sure. Take a look at old television commercials.

Back in the days when I watched soap operas with my stay-at-home mom, women were portrayed as incompetent and bumbling housekeepers – always in need of some off-camera male voice to provide the perfect cleaning product. Now, that stereotype has been reversed. Today it is men who are the domestic morons incapable of cleaning a shirt, making a pizza, or organizing a family vacation.

Again, this isn't an improvement – but it is a noticeable change.

There are lots of examples of the "idiot dad" advertisement. One such ad campaign currently underway is the "what's in your wallet" series of credit card ads for Capital One. In each of the advertisements, a dad

– who obviously doesn't make enough money – has booked a family vacation on the cheap. In one spot, the family suffers through a biblical plague of mosquitoes. In another, it's hurricane season at the resort. So whether they're incapable of hooking up basic cable, or nagged and hounded by their more capable wives, or lusting after a new car or a hot girl, the message is the same: Men are idiots.

Who's to blame?

Some people are upset by this.

Paul Nathanson and Katherine K. Young – both professors of religious Studies at McGill University – wrote a book called *Spreading Misandry: The Teaching of Contempt for Men in Popular Culture*. They argue that misandry (the opposite of misogyny) "has become so embedded in our culture that few people – including men – even recognize it." (Indeed, even my spellchecker doesn't recognize the word "misandry"!)

They go on to say that "these problems should sound very familiar. Precisely the same ones arose 30 years ago, in connection with discussions of women as portrayed in popular culture." In other words, women are ganging up on men, and getting even.

Others disagree. Others point out that women aren't sending the message that men are irresponsible fathers and lazy, foolish husbands – men are doing that, themselves. After all, ad executives are overwhelmingly men. The audience for many of these ads is men. The people delivering the "shape up" message from the pulpit are men.

The real question is: why?

Nathanson and Young argue that the negative portrayals of men in the media and popular culture are a kind of feminist backlash. Some see just the opposite. They say that showing men as incompetent fathers and housekeepers reinforces the notion that domestic work is the woman's job. So the argument goes around and around. The only thing anyone agrees upon is that men are getting the short end of the stick these days in popular culture.

Which brings us back to the church.

Instead of extolling mothers and exhorting fathers – let us do both, for both. Let us look at what our children need – loving and skilful parents – and strive to do better for their sake. Let us look at we need – to be lifted up by one another – not only because it makes us better parents but because it makes us better partners.

In a world that is broken in so many ways, there is an opportunity for Christians to bring healing.

And it can start from the pulpit this Mother's Day.

Lloyd Rang (Lloyd.rang@rogers.com) is a member of Rehoboth CRC in Bowmanville, Ontario.

High-tech dreams and God's providence



Technically Speaking

Derek Schuurman

An engineering adventure began for me in 1994 when I joined a small high-tech start-up as one of five initial employees working together in a single room. Freshly equipped with an engineering Masters degree from Waterloo, I was confident of a promising career, in at the ground floor at a new high-tech startup, complete with shares and stock options. As time passed, our company grew quickly and gained the attention of various investors. Over the next few years, our five employees expanded to over 60, and we moved into a spacious building where we set up a high-tech circuit board assembly line. The future appeared bright and lucrative for this small company.

We took on many projects with aggressive deadlines, and there was frequent travel. I often put in long days. On one occasion I recall working through the night at a customer's site, on another occasion I recall falling asleep in the front lobby at work after working late into the night. Long working hours and an intense pace are frequently part of the *ethos* at many high-tech companies. My solid Calvinist work ethic was satisfied with these patterns, but something was not right. Living and working in a fast-paced intense environment can be exciting, but it also came at a cost. I wasn't spending enough time at home, I felt anxious, and I lacked a sense of peace about my vocation.

God's favour

I have no doubt that God calls people to work in high tech companies, like Daniel, who worked in the high-tech center of Babylon in his day. Nevertheless, my wife and I sensed the Lord was prodding me in the direction of teaching. Eventually, in 2000, my wife and I decided I should quit the company I had helped to build, and return to school to earn a PhD so that I could teach. At this point I had three small children, a mortgage, and no clear idea how this would all work out. However, after we made our decision to return to school, it felt like a huge burden had been lifted from my shoulders, and I had a sense of peace that I hadn't felt in a long time.

It also became abundantly clear that God was taking care of us. I discovered that I was awarded a scholarship that would pay a modest salary to return to school, my wife found a part-time teaching job at a local Christian school, and things began to fall in place. We sold our house and moved to Hamilton, where I studied at McMaster University. As it turned out, my thesis neared completion just as my scholarship money ran out, and Redeemer University College decided to hire a computer science professor at precisely this same time. There were many more "coincidences"

along these lines.

In the meantime, I learned that the company I left had gone through some very tough times – the future, which had been bright, was less certain now. I was told that management had been expecting a large capital investment, which did not materialize. Apparently they were on the phone with an investor who suddenly hung up because a plane had just hit his building. It was 9/11, and investment funds had dried up. Also, the tech bubble had burst and orders were down; the company was forced to lay off many of its staff. I had been spared the turmoil that started soon after I left.

Burn-out valley

When investing, venture capitalists generally use a rule-of-thumb that out of 10 companies, one will take off, three or four will be marginally successful, and the rest will fail. Many people toil for years in the hopes of launching a successful IPO (an Initial Public Offering on the stock market) and cashing in. For these companies, there are often many personal costs: failed marriages, stress, burn-out, anxiety, and related health problems. The church often focuses on reaching out to the down-and-out, but I would argue that there is an equally pressing need to reach the up-and-out in situations like these.

My wife and I found it remarkable how God provided when we were willing to follow his prodding and take the first few steps. This chapter in our lives reminds me in a small way of Joshua 3 when the Israelites crossed the Jordan; they were instructed to set foot in the Jordan, and only when their feet touched the waters edge did God prepare a path for them through the waters. We need to trust and obey, something with which I continue to struggle. And often that involves setting aside trust in our own power and stock options. We need to allow God's power to work through our weakness, to let go, place our toes in the Jordan, and follow his call.

Recently, what remains of the high-tech company that I helped build will be sold along with my own shares in the company. At one point, my shares in the company were valued at several hundred thousand dollars, but in the end they were sold for \$100. I plan to use the money to take my family out for dinner and celebrate God's faithfulness in our lives.

Dr. Derek Schuurman (dschuur@csredeemer.ca) is a full-time computer science professor at Redeemer University College. He and his wife and four children live in Hamilton, Ontario.



News

Will justice delayed become justice denied?

Karadzic on trial for war crimes

Harold Alkema

THE HAUGUE, The Netherlands – Radovan Karadzic's easy manner as he jokes with his legal team at the International Criminal Tribunal for the former Yugoslavia (ICTY) in The Hague, The Netherlands, his declarations of innocence and his claims that he served a "just and holy cause" in the Bosnian War (1992-1995), tend to belie the seriousness of his current situation. The 64-year-old former Bosnian Serb leader is facing charges that include eleven counts of genocide and war crimes perpetrated against Bosnian Muslims and Croats in a war that killed 100,000 people.

In his first appearance before the tribunal in November 2009, Karadzic claimed he needed more time to prepare his case, so he could work his way through the more than one million pages of testimony disclosed to him by the prosecution. Karadzic has decided to defend himself. He regularly boycotts proceedings and has refused to enter a plea. Ultimately, the head of the tribunal entered a "not guilty" plea on his behalf to allow the trial to begin.

Karadzic's behaviour has led observers to believe that he is using the same stalling tactics as his mentor and political ally Slobodan Milosevic, who died in custody in 2006 while facing charges involving war crimes and crimes against humanity related to his role in the Yugoslav Wars (1991-1995) and Kosovo War (1998-1999). Milosevic managed to draw his trial out over four years. His death and several high-profile acquittals have brought the reputation of the ICTY into question.

Award-winning liar

In Bosnia, many seem to doubt that the tribunal can deal with Karadzic's antics.

"He should be given the Nobel Prize for lying," said Sabra Kolenovic of Mothers of Srebrenica, an organization dedicated to locating victims of the Srebrenica massacre and reuniting the living with their families when possible. Karadzic stands accused of ordering the execution of up to 8,000 Muslim boys and men in Srebrenica. Karadzic has claimed, at trial, that the massacre at Srebrenica never happened and was based on "false myths and false victims." He also confidentially asserted that "It is going to be easy for me to prove I had nothing to do with it." The prosecution has countered that the massacre was a deliberate attempt by Karadzic and the Serb military to create an "ethnically pure" zone and add territory to a greater Bosnian Serb republic.

Other Bosnians are of the opinion that the ICTY cannot sentence Karadzic properly given the magnitude of the charges against him.

"I don't believe they can punish him enough," Muhamed Dizdar, a merchant in Markale market, stated while speaking to the Associated Press news agency. "They should send him back to us here in Sarajevo

so we can hang him in the middle of the city," he concluded.

Many in Sarajevo feel the same way as Dizdar. More than 12,000 died in Serb military actions against the city. Some of the most serious charges against Karadzic relate to the forty-four month siege of Sarajevo. The prosecution claims that forces under his command deliberately shelled civilian areas and targeted non-combatants with sniper fire.

Unreliable narrator

Karadzic has countered that the massacres of civilians in the city were perpetrated by the Bosnian Serb's enemies against their own in order to bring NATO into the conflict. Karadzic noted, "We can prove that [Bosnian Serb enemies] did shell their own people and killed all their own people." He also claimed that Sarajevo



Bosnian Serb wartime leader, Radovan Karadzic (R) and his general Ratko Mladic.

was "not a city under siege, but a city divided." He added that the entire war only came about because the Bosnian Muslims "wanted 100 percent power" and rejected Serb peace offers to pursue this goal.

While prosecutors want Karadzic to be

able to make a full defence, they are also trying to expedite his trial. They have narrowed down the range of charges in an effort to speed up the process. They have also called on judges to force Karadzic to attend sessions, even if he must do so in handcuffs. Karadzic's trial is scheduled to end in 2012. The ICTY could be shut down after that date, or its closure could be delayed if the two remaining fugitives wanted by the UN are captured before that time.

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Country living

Maynard van der Galien



Farmers wax poetic on the weather

I thought only farmers and outdoorsy people listen to weather forecasts. Not so. I read somewhere that 93 per cent of Canadians start their day checking the weather on television, the radio or the Internet.

Farmers have a vested interest in knowing what the weather will be in the days ahead.

Older farmers forecast the weather by watching the sky, the wind, and the cattle. "A cow with its tail to the west makes the weather best." But "a cow with its tail to the east makes the weather least." When cattle are grazing, it's a different story. They are not bothered by winds if the grazing is good.

Older farmers, like my father, always observed the weather. First thing in the morning he'd check the sky, and in the evening he'd look at how the sun set. If it set in a "nest," as he called it – a dirty sky that resembled a mare's tail or a painter's brush – it was a sign of rain. Red sky in the evening meant nice weather ahead. (Red sky in morning, sailor take warning. Red sky at night, sailor's delight). A ring around the sun or moon means there is moisture in the air. When our south side front barn door blew shut during milking, it was a sure sign of rain coming.

Ancient sayings

I remember the important sayings Father taught me. Many were in Dutch, such as this one: "*Avondrood, morgen mooi weer aan boot; ochtendrood vanavond water in de sloot.*" (Evening red, tomorrow fine weather on boat; morning red, tonight water in the moat).

He didn't look at the thickness of onion skins, or the height of wasp nests – that kind of stuff. But he would pay attention when smoke ascended straight up. It meant there would be little likelihood of rain. There's a saying: "Chimney smoke descends, our nice weather ends." Other favorites were:

Mare's tails and mackerel scales make tall ships take in their sails.

Rain before seven, quits before eleven.

A wind from the south has rain in her mouth.

Rain from the east, two wet days at least.

If a circle forms around the moon, it will rain soon.

When dew is on the grass, rain will never come to pass.

When grass is dry at morning light, look for rain before the night.

Cold is the night when the stars shine bright.

No weather is ill, if the wind be still.

Catchy drawer and sticky door, coming rain will pour and pour.

Rain long foretold, long last, short notice, soon will pass.

When the ditch and pond offend the nose, then look out for rain and stormy blows.

The sudden storm blast lasts not three hours.

The sharper the blast, the sooner 'tis past.

The higher the clouds, the finer the weather.

Stuff and nonsense

When I was 16 years old (1966), I worked in construction – about 100 miles from home – and boarded nearby. For a year our crew (plumbers and steam pipe fitters) worked 13½-hour days, 63 hours a week. Fridays we quit at 4 and went home for the weekend. I'd help out on the farm and go back on Sunday evening.

Gerty, an elderly single woman, owned and ran the boarding house that housed 10 construction workers for four or five nights a week. She was a tiny bent-over woman. We'd be at work at 7 a.m., come back to the boarding house for supper, and then work until 10 p.m., have a snack and go to bed. We often had fun during meals when we'd talk about upcoming weather. Gerty had no use for weather lore. Hard as we tried, none of us could convince her that there is some truth to the weather lore sayings.

Half of the boarders were from Quebec – outdoorsy lads – and they could get Gerty worked up. Lionel would say, "Gerty, we're in for some rain because the crickets are chirping." Then Andre the welder would pipe in saying he saw a ring around the moon last night, and Desmond would tell her he saw "sheep standing in a huddle, tomorrow we'll have a puddle." I'd add about the barn door blowing shut. And so it went. Gerty would shake her head in disgust. "I can't believe you guys," she would say. "How can you believe that kind of stuff?" Gerty always thought we were pulling her leg.

Father taught me to observe the sky. Gerty's dad obviously didn't!

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is a Renfrew-area farmer and agriculture columnist. His father was born in 1907 and died in 1977.



Church

Catholic abuse survivors to hold 'Reformation Day' in St. Peter's Square

WASHINGTON, D.C. (CNS) — Two survivors of clergy sexual abuse who met with Pope Benedict XVI during his 2008 visit to Washington are planning to take their pleas for greater recognition of the spiritual, pastoral and mental health needs of abuse victims to the doorstep of the Vatican on October 31, which Reformed Protestants know as Reformation Day.

Olan Horne of Westfield, Massachusetts and Bernie McDaid of Peabody, Massachusetts, told Catholic News Service they are planning a gathering that they hope will bring thousands of abuse victims to St. Peter's Square for a new "Reformation Day."

Both men said the effort stems from a building frustration in dealing with church officials on the needs of abuse victims. The date is significant because, they said, because of its association with "reformation."

"The victims of these crimes have never really been heard correctly or had their day or voice," McDaid said. "It's always been overdubbed or behind the church, the lawsuits, the lawyers, talk of Catholic reform, etc., etc., etc. Not that any of these issues are not important, it's just that the victims have been on the side and hurt by the politics."

In planning for the gathering, Horne and McDaid met via teleconference on April 20 with representatives of several groups working on a variety of fronts regarding transparency, church finances, church decision-making and clergy sexual abuse to build support for the October gathering.

The men explained that they also are contacting priestly abuse victims worldwide to encourage them to travel to the Vatican. McDaid said he is especially working with victims in Ireland and Germany, where the church's handling of abuse cases has been widely reported on and criticized.

Hoped for day of healing

Vatican authorities have emphasized that it was the Pope who, as Cardinal Joseph Ratzinger, pushed for harsher measures against abusers and made it easier for the church to defrock them. During his recent trip to Malta, Pope Benedict, in a meeting with

eight abuse victims, promised them the church would do "all in its power" to bring offenders to justice and protect children.

"Reformation Day is a chance for these victims, survivors and their loved ones and all good priests who know in their heart



Bernie McDaid.

that it's time for change to stand with us in St. Peter's Square on this beautiful day of healing," McDaid told CNS.

Horne, 50, and McDaid, 54, are hoping to gather 50,000 people at the Vatican. "If you have the square filled with survivors, mostly men, united in this one place in that one moment, standing up for themselves, this is a healing moment," said McDaid, one of numerous youngsters abused in the 1960s and 1970s by then-Father Joseph Birmingham, who once served as a priest in the Boston Archdiocese and since has been laicized.

Both men say they feel the church has failed to adequately involve abuse survivors in efforts to help change the way the church responds to abuse allegations. Horne cited, in particular, the fact that there is no permanent representation by abuse survivors on the 13-member National Review Board, which advises the bishops' Committee for the Protection of Children and Young People on matters of child and youth protection. "There needs to be a survivor's viewpoint. That has been effectively missing across the country and elsewhere in Europe."

The planned October gathering comes two and a half years after the two men and three other abuse victims met with Pope Benedict at the papal nuncio's residence in Washington. Afterward, Horne and McDaid pledged to hold the pope's

"feet to the fire" to ensure a better response from the church to the needs of abuse victims.

"We're calling on everybody, people in the pews, priests ... who know in their hearts the church is in dire need of change," Horne said. "This is not an attack on the Catholic Church. We're asking the church to join us." In fact, Horne and McDaid are hoping Pope Benedict will join the gathering as a way to show his support for clergy abuse victims globally.

The men said they want the church to broadcast the event to parishes worldwide to acknowledge its support for the needs of abuse victims. "We're going to forward with this whether the Vatican agrees with us or not," Horne added. "Nobody can deny the size and magnitude of the issue any more."

Christians now outnumber Muslims in sub-Saharan Africa by 2 to 1

WASHINGTON/ROME (CWN/Agenzia Fides) — A study published on April 15 by the Pew Forum on Religion & Public Life has found that the number of Christians in sub-Saharan Africa has, in the last century, grown to 470 million from seven million in 1900. During the same time period, the number of Muslims grew to 234 million from 11 million.

In 1900, 76 percent of the population of sub-Saharan Africa practiced indigenous religions, while 14 percent were Muslim and nine percent were Christian. Today, 57 percent of the population is Christian, while 29 percent are Muslim and 13 percent practice indigenous religions — though aspects of those religions are often adopted by large number of both Muslims and Christians.

Between December 2008 and April 2009 Pew surveyed 25,000 Africans in 60 languages and 19 countries.

The report shows that one out of every five Christians and one out of every seven Muslims worldwide live in sub-Saharan Africa. While sub-Saharan Africa has almost twice as many Christians as Muslims, on the African continent as a whole the two faiths are roughly balanced, with 400 million to 500 million followers each.

The report notes that in sub-Saharan Africa, Christians and Muslims generally have a positive view of each other, and in most countries, relatively few people think that there is hostility against Muslims or Christians.

Many Africans say they are concerned about religious extremism, even within their own faith. Many Muslims say they are more concerned about Muslim extremism than about Christian extremism, and Christians in four countries (Ghana, South Africa, Uganda, and Zambia) say they are more concerned about extremism from Christians than from Muslims.

CRC Canucks fans launch another goat campaign

LANGLEY, B.C. (CRCNA) — *They're baaaaaa-ck!* The Langley, B.C., natives who first brought you GoatCanucksGoat in 2009 and GoatForGold in 2010 have once again launched a campaign to raise funds for goats as part of their support for their favourite athletes, the Vancouver Canucks NHL hockey team.

The second GoatCanucksGoat campaign has begun and fans are encouraging each other to donate a goat to someone in need every time the Canucks win a game in the hockey playoffs.

"I know I said it last year ... and the year before ... and the year before, but *this* is the Canucks year! I can feel it," said Joel Nagtegaal, one of the campaign's founders. If they do succeed in becoming Stanley Cup Champions, that could mean hundreds of goats for people in need.

Nagtegaal was part of the original GoatCanucksGoat campaign that raised enough money to send 1,073 goats to Kenya last year. The same group of men from B.C. also launched GoatForGold during the Olympics and encouraged fans to

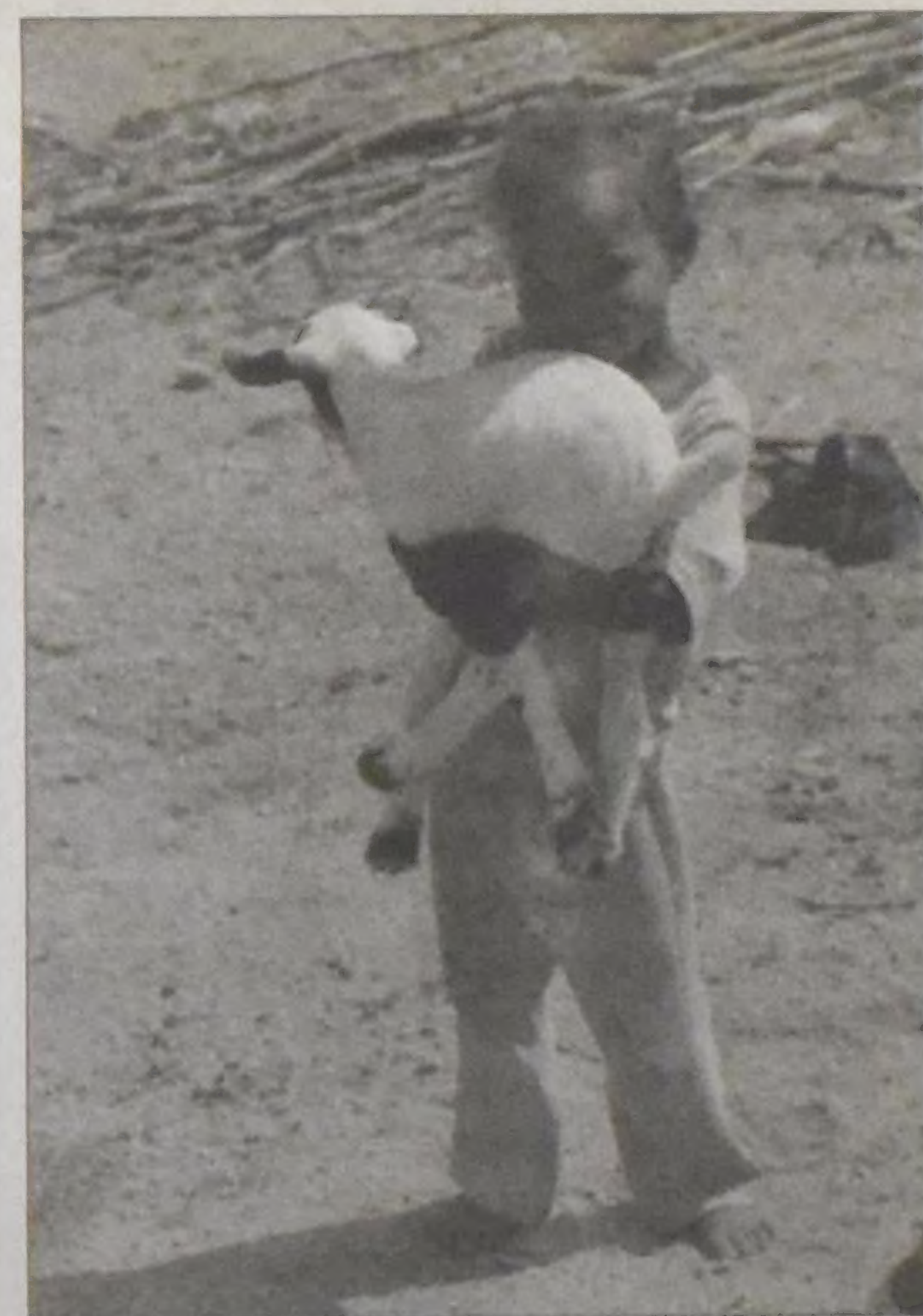
donate a goat for every Canadian gold medal. After 14 gold medals, the campaign raised enough money for 368 goats.

Not 'goated out' yet

Each of these goats is making a huge difference to the lives of someone in need. The Christian Reformed World Relief Committee (CRWRC) purchases the goats as near as possible to where the families live. The goats are then distributed to those most in need. Families each receive

one or more female goats. The community gets male goats that can be used by various families for breeding. As kids are born, they are given back to the community so that more people can be helped.

"I wasn't going to set anything up for Goat Canucks Goat this year as I thought that between the goats last year and the recent Olympic goats people may have been a little "goated out." I've been getting emails daily for the last week or



Kenyan child holding a donated goat.

so from people telling me they are excited about GoatCanucksGoat so I figure we may as well do it again," said Nagtegaal. "Even if the goat-o-meter reaches one goat that still benefits somebody!"

To read updates and to find out how to donate to this year's GoatCanucksGoat campaign, visit www.goatcanucksgoat.com online or become a fan of the cause on Facebook.

Education

Opera star joins The King's choirs

EDMONTON (TKUC) – On April 19 one of Europe's finest bass-baritones, Pavlo Hunka, performed with The King's University College Choirs at the Winspear Centre in Edmonton.

Hunka has sung in more than 50 operas, including at least 30 major roles in the world's leading opera houses in Paris, Vienna, Munich, Florence, London, Salzburg, Amsterdam, Madrid and Moscow, under the baton of the world's leading opera conductors: Claudio Abbado, Jeffrey Tate, Zubin Mehta and others.

A few years ago, Hunka established an enormous project whose goal is to record and promote the classical treasures of the Ukrainian Art Song. This multi-year endeavour, known as the Ukrainian Art Song Project, aims to record more than 300 dramatic songs, many of which are masterpieces by Ukrainian composers.

This past summer, Hunka completed the mastering of a six-CD compilation of the art songs of Mykola Lysenko. He also flew to Toronto to begin recording the art songs of Yakiv Stepovyi at CBC's Glenn Gould Studio.

Hunka returned to Canada in early April for further recording in Toronto. In the week prior to the concert in Edmonton, Hunka led various master classes and workshops with local choirs and singers. He also sang as part of the 10 a.m. Divine Liturgy at St. Josaphat Ukrainian Catholic Cathedral on Sunday, April 11. He then headed to Edmonton. The King's faculty member Dr. Melanie Turgeon conducted choral portions of the April 19 concert entitled "Since the Art Song."



Pavlo Hunka in performance at The Kings University College.

The concert included Hunka performing as a soloist with King's faculty member Dr. Joachim Segger on piano. He also sang three pieces with The King's choirs and one additional song with Edmonton's Dnipro Choir, a guest-chorus for this particular concert.

In addition to Hunka sharing art songs with the audience, the choirs tried to depict how vast and diverse composition has become since the 19th century when the art song thrived as an art form. The concert included works by Brahms, Chesnokov, Hurko, Lysenko, Poulenc, Stetsenko, Stolte, Stroope and others. ✂

Calvin Seminary nominates new president

GRAND RAPIDS, Mich. (CRCNA) – The Calvin Theological Seminary (CTS) board of trustees has unanimously nominated Rev. Julius Medenblik to be the eighth president of the 134-year-old institution.

Medenblik has been chosen by the board to succeed current president Cornelius Plantinga Jr. who will leave office at the



Calvin Seminary located in Grand Rapids.

conclusion of the 2010-2011 academic year. The nomination is subject to interview by the board of trustees of the Christian Reformed Church in North America, and to final appointment by the Christian Reformed Church Synod in June of this year. He was nominated for the post by an 11-member search committee.

Medenblik is the senior pastor of New Life Christian Reformed Church in New Lenox, Illinois. He is one of the founders of that congregation. Under his leadership it has grown from four members to more than 700. He is also involved in leading church-planting efforts by the denomination, and he was recently chairperson of the Calvin Seminary board of trustees.

Medenblik holds a BA degree from Trinity Christian

College, a *juris doctor* with honors from the University of Florida Law School and a Master of Divinity (MDiv) from Calvin Theological Seminary.

Search committee chair Rev. Kevin Adams said, "We are unanimous in our support for Jul because we feel he possesses in abundance the gifts needed to promote the seminary's unique mission in a variety of contexts. He brings a desire to know students, to listen to faculty and staff, and [to] cultivate partners outside the seminary in order to serve the church."

No directional change

"I am humbled and energized by this opportunity," said Medenblik. "Calvin Theological Seminary is deeply rooted in and nurtured by the church. We have a great opportunity to use those roots to nourish preachers and church leaders for the ministries and new opportunities that await us in the mission field around each and every one of us."

In an interview, he added, "I have been blessed to serve God and his church in an abundance of settings and positions.... I am energized to join the seminary

community in connecting theological excellence with pastoral sensitivity and insights as we serve together in the mission that God has before us."

Current CTS president Plantinga noted, "The seminary has made a fresh and bold choice of its next president. Julius Medenblik is an ecclesiastical entrepreneur – a Christian leader of proven accomplishment in the church and, as chair of Calvin Seminary's trustees, already a leader of the seminary. As a trustee he helped to shape the seminary's new calendar and curriculum, so I'm confident he will steer our ship in the same direction he helped set for it. I look forward to working closely with Jul during the transition from one president to the next, and I will do so with joy." ✂

Two Calvin profs win prestigious Fulbright Award

GRAND RAPIDS, Mich. (Calvin College) – Two Calvin College professors have earned the prestigious Fulbright Award for 2010-2011. Funded by the U.S. Department of State, the awards are scholarships established to foster international research.

Henk Aay, a professor of geology, geography and environmental studies will conduct research in the Netherlands from March to June, 2011, focusing on documentary films made about that country. The films he will study were made by the Dutch government and distributed throughout the U.S. from 1942 to 1974 by the Netherlands Information Bureau (NIB). Aay will be screening a sizeable sampling of films from the NIB collection, comparing them with other documentaries about the Netherlands made at the time.

"Dutch-American relations have long been studied with many different topical themes and viewpoints," says Aay. "This study will add a new dimension to this literature by focusing on cultural diplomacy via film."

Aay is a native of the Netherlands and has been researching Dutch language and culture for 25 years. He has spent several sabbaticals at the University of Groningen and at the Free University in Amsterdam, and has led 10 Calvin interim classes to the Netherlands.

Amy Patterson, a Calvin professor of political science, will conduct research in Zambia for six months, beginning

in January, 2011. She will study how HIV support groups, both Christian and secular, empower their members emotionally, socially and politically.

Patterson first traveled to Zambia in 2007



Henk Aay

Amy Patterson

to conduct research with Calvin student and McGregor Scholar Kyla Vander Hart. Political science professor Bill Stevenson says of Patterson, "She is increasingly recognized – and this Fulbright is evidence of it – as an international scholarly authority on the politics of AIDS in Africa."

This past February Patterson won Calvin's first-ever Faculty Advising and Mentoring Award, in part because of the work she has done mentoring students in Calvin's Model UN program. "She's a tremendous young scholar and a great teacher," says Stevenson. ✂

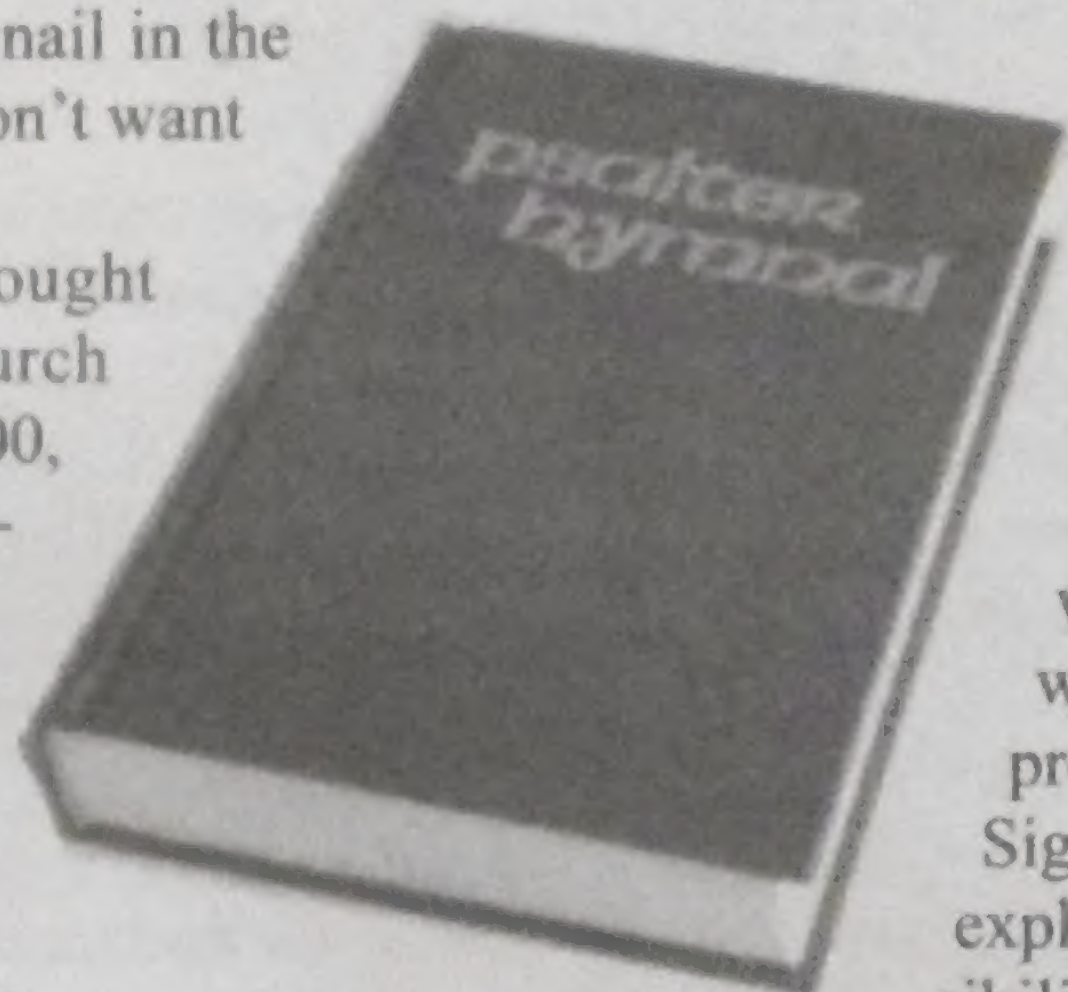
Perspectives

New hymnal in planning stages

Curt Gesch

Back in the 80s, when the Christian Reformed Church was in the process of producing a new *Psalter Hymnal* (published in 1987), I remember someone remarking, "A denomination should revise their hymnal at least every twenty-five years." To people like me, who looked forward to a replacement of the 1959 blue *Psalter Hymnal*, those were words from heaven. "Good," I thought, "one more nail in the coffin of those who don't want any change."

But time hath wrought great changes to church music. By the year 2000, some churches had jettisoned their *Psalter Hymnals* and relied totally on songs picked up via CCLI or the Christian Contemporary Music movement. Other churches used the grey *Psalter*, but sparingly. Some CRC churches were using the blue *Psalter*, but occasionally supplementing it with anthemic contemporary songs like "Shine, Jesus Shine" and "In Christ Alone."



A new songbook

Already in 2003, Faith Alive – publisher for the CRC and Reformed Church of America (RCA) – had conducted an informal survey of how well the 1987 *Psalter Hymnal* was meeting the church's needs.

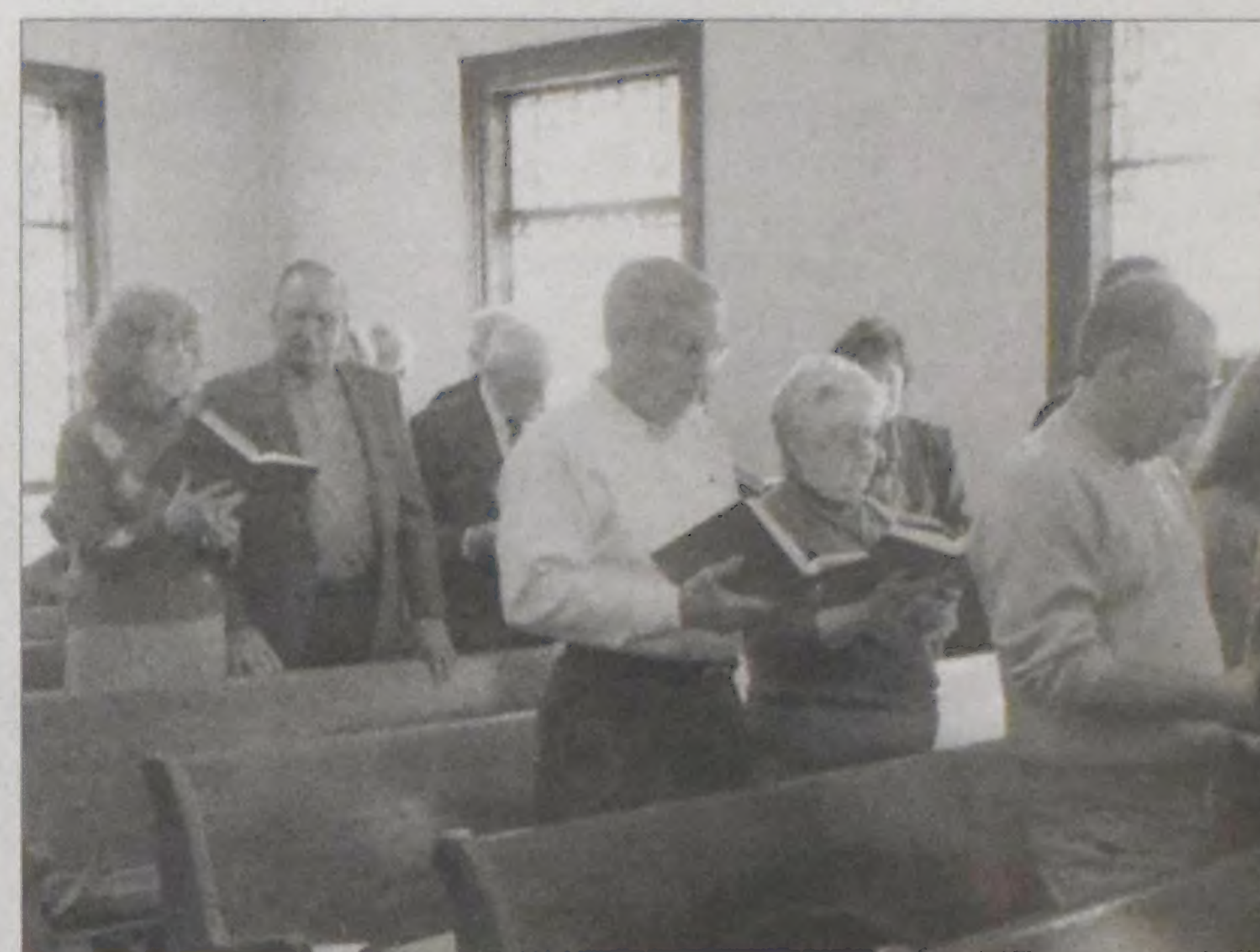
By 2005 the Faith Alive board members began thinking seriously about producing a new hymnal. According to Joyce Borger, Music and Worship Editor of Faith Alive Christian Resources, board members, "... knew that most hymnals have a twenty-year pew life (which would be 2007) and that the process of developing a new hymnal was long. In essence, if we waited until the need was expressed we would be too late." Significantly, "We also began to explore with the RCA... the possibility of doing a joint hymnal."

In 2005 Faith Alive staff members met with various hymnal publishers to discuss possibilities. The Evangelical Lutheran Church of America (ELCA) was represented in the consultation. Having recently published a hymnal the ELCA was able to report that, although many congrega-

tions used projected songs almost exclusively, their hymnal sales were much greater than expected. The consensus of the meeting was that while hymnal use may be curtailed, hymnals themselves were not going to disappear.

The Faith Alive Board then approved a motion to explore the possibility of a bi-denominational hymnbook (CRC/RCA), to think about formats (books, electronic), and to survey CRC and RCA churches.

While these processes were being implemented, discussions continued with CRC and RCA members about the complex issues of hymnal production such as format, selection criteria for including songs in the finished collection, and the overall concept. A draft proposal for selection criteria was developed and the mandated survey carried out.



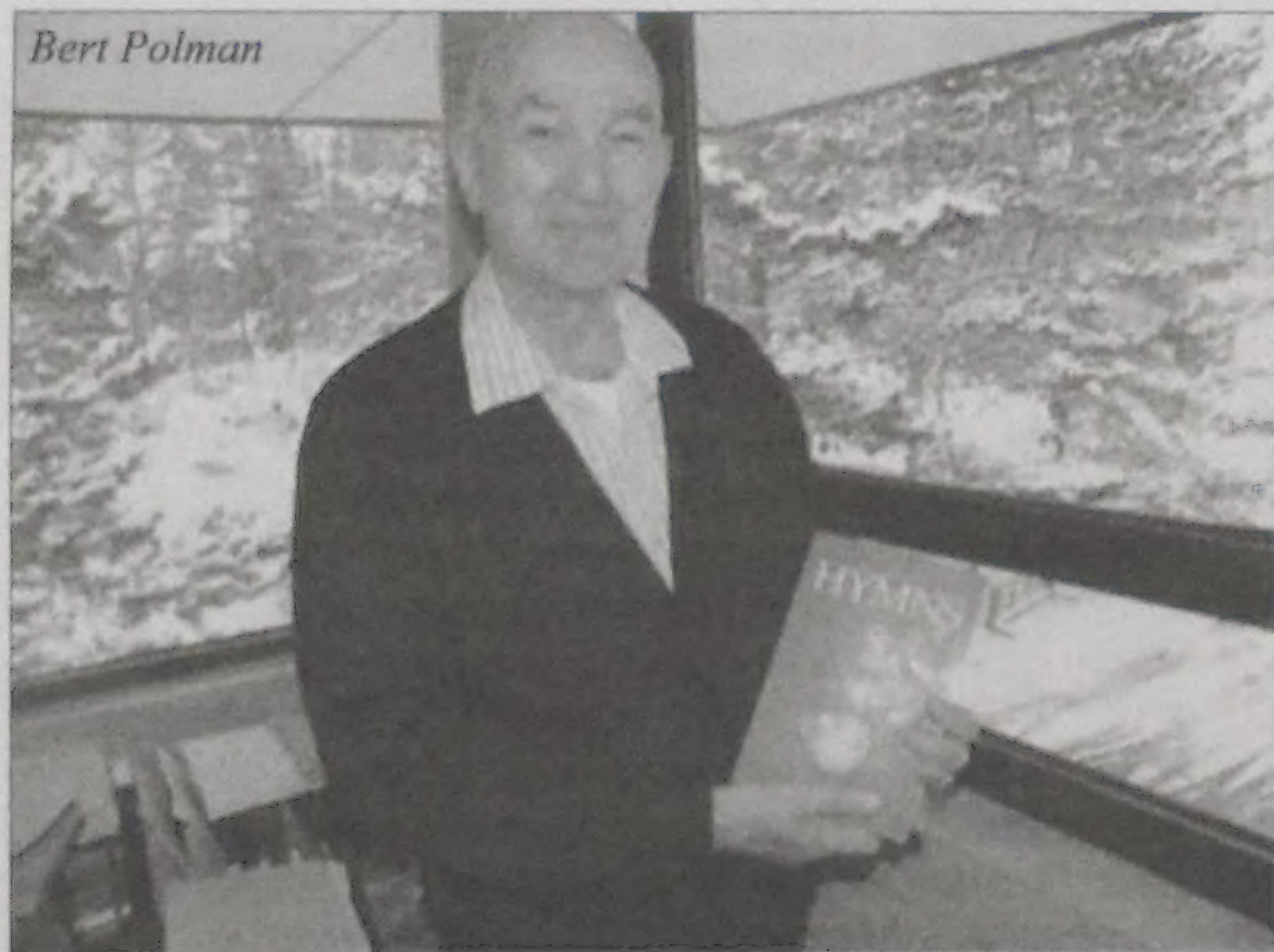
The new hymnal, scheduled to be published in January 2013, will be called *Lift Up Your Hearts: Psalms, Hymns and Spiritual Songs*.

(#1 of several progress reports on *Lift Up Your Hearts*)

The author and Christian Courier thank the Rev. Joyce Borger for supplying much of the information on this page.

Singing in tune an interview on the new CRC/RCA hymnal

Bert Polman



Angela Reitsma Bick

Bert Polman, Chair of Music at Calvin College, has been on six hymnal committees in his career as a hymnologist. Here are his thoughts on the forthcoming hymnal.

CC: One of the reasons why the RCA and CRC originally went separate ways was over whether to sing hymns or psalms. Does this hymnal's joint production represent how much closer the denominations are now?

Polman: The RCA initially came to the USA singing only psalms, but then gradually adopted hymns as well. The CRC folks arrived several hundred years later, singing only psalms, and then also gradually adopted hymns. We've had similar journeys, only out of step with each other in our

historical time-frame, but our current situation is the same – both denominations sing psalms and hymns.

CC: In *Lift Up Your Hearts* (forthcoming in 2013), the psalms will be integrated throughout rather than in a separate section. What is the advantage (or disadvantage) of this?

Polman: Singing of psalm texts is in decline in both denominations, so anything that can be done to get psalms back "into our bloodstream" is important. The advantage is that psalm settings are more likely to be used when they're published alongside hymns on a similar topic. The disadvantage is that all 150 psalms will not be readily found in one section (although an index will provide that info).

CC: You mentioned that many contemporary songs are theologically weak. Can you give a few examples? Do you think it reflects a faith that is not fully fleshed out?

Polman: I won't mention examples for fear of getting a libel suit! Various theologians have pointed out that the modern group of Praise & Worship songs are terribly deficient on such important Christian doctrines as the Trinity and Christian practices of social justice. On the other hand, there are some glorious new songs available to congregations today – one of the best is "In Christ alone my hope is found." Many church leaders are convinced that some of the old hymns are crucial for feeding faith today, that we need a healthy mix of old-time hymns, new hymns, the best of Praise songs and global songs from the world-wide church of Christ.

CC: What do you see as the opportunities for this hymnal? What role does a hard-bound hymnal have in churches today?

Polman: Any new hymnal these days will always only be a "core" collection, offering a well-sifted collection of the best settings of "psalms, hymns, and spiritual songs." Even churches which still consistently use a hymnal in the pew (or also project hymns as well as have pew hymnals) are likely to supplement this collection with other songs from time to time, or even regularly, as the resources for congregational songs are vast today. To the extent that a hymnal is a collection of lay people's theology and worship practices, a hard-bound hymnal is a testimony across the generations of what has been found valuable. It is a foundational collection of songs for praise and prayer, of doctrinal expression, and encouragement towards Christian living. And that two similar denominations should get together on a project like this is a wonderful step in ecumenicity.

What's your opinion?

Is it time for a new hymnal?
What changes would you like to see made from the current *Psalter Hymnal*?
What is the role of the hymnal in today's church?

Sound off at www.christiancourier.ca guestbook or on our Facebook page (search for *Christian Courier* group).

Debate

Belhar Confession debated

Part V

What are the implications of adopting a new confession in terms of our ties to other Reformed denominations that do not adopt it and to the broader ecumenical community of churches? Does it set a precedent for consideration of a whole panoply of additional confessions (e.g. the Accra Confession)?

Belhar may cause division

John Bolt

This is a very important question, particularly because the Belhar Confession is about *reconciliation*, indeed about reconciling racially divided Reformed churches. What happens if it becomes the occasion for separating us from some churches? I even wonder if the Belhar might not be potentially a divisive document for the CRC because it introduces divisions on matters of race that I believed we had overcome with our own 1996 synodical statement, "God's Diverse and Unified Family." Those who oppose adopting the Belhar as a fourth confession for any number of reasons find themselves in a position where they risk being labeled as "racists." The *content* of the Belhar confesses reconciliation while the *result* of adopting it potentially creates division. In my judgment, that is sufficient reason in itself for the CRC not to adopt it as a confession; the irony is unbearable.

A confessional church like the CRC can take two different approaches to adding a confession, and both of them, I believe, are honourable. We can go it alone, write a confession ourselves as a response to some urgent need in the church, adopt it and then invite others to join us. If the need is sufficiently urgent we are free to go ahead and not wait for others to jump on board. Such a move would, however, be extraordinary, and it is the better part of wisdom to go the other route, namely to add confessions in consultation with and along with other Reformed Churches that share our basic commitment to Reformed orthodoxy.

Pressure to conform

And there's the rub! The Belhar Confession is also in process toward adoption by the Presbyterian Church in the United States and our close North American cousin, the Reformed Church in America. At this point, so far as I have been able to tell, in addition to the Uniting Reformed Church in Southern Africa (URCSA), the only other church that has officially adopted it is the United Protestant Church in Belgium (*Verenigde Protestantse Kerk in België* (VPKB)/ *l'Église Protestante Unie de Belgique* (EPUB), a minority church in a predominantly Roman Catholic nation.

Of course, numbers alone do not decide the issue but here is something that ought to give us pause: In order for the previously whites-only Dutch Reformed Church in South Africa (DRCSA) to join the Uniting

Reformed Church of South Africa (URCSA), the URCSA has made it a prerequisite that all of its members adopt the Belhar Confession. The DRCSA wants the union, agreed to ask new members to subscribe to the Belhar but decided not to compel its existing members to accept it. Rather, it encouraged *voluntary* submission. The URCSA's position was that all members of the DRCSA should be *required* to swear that the Belhar Confession is true, or face expulsion from the denomination. The DRCSA is reluctant to demand this loyalty test because a good number of its members are convinced that the Belhar has within it elements of liberation theology (theology that begins with an analysis of oppression and determines the validity of theological statements by whether they support or repudiate liberation).

What the CRC faces therefore is the prospect of adopting a confession to align with a church that professes reconciliation but in fact demands submission to its own point of view *or else*. We have here firsthand evidence of how the bothersome fourth article of the Belhar ("God is on the side of the oppressed") is and will be put into practice. It is a confession using *theological language* that is used to achieve *political ends*. When one of its key authors, Dr. Allan Boesak, claimed that a proper understanding of the Belhar meant liberation for gay people including the right for practicing gays to be ordained, he was consistent with the understanding that the Belhar is at least a mild form of liberation theology.

Adopting the Belhar may have the advantage of strengthening our ties to the URCSA and churches in WARC; it will clearly alienate us further from more conservative Reformed and Presbyterian churches. That is what is at stake for the CRC.

Too political

What about the precedent-setting character of adopting the Belhar? Accra Con-

In 1982, a Reformed church in Belhar, a suburb of Cape Town in South Africa, wrote a confession of faith that focused on social justice issues that arose around apartheid. Since then, the Belhar Confession has been accepted by some African and European Reformed churches as equal to the Belgic Confession, the Canons of Dordt and the Heidelberg Catechism. In July, the Synod of the Reformed Church in America (RCA) accepted it as a fourth confession and the Christian Reformed Church of North America (CRCNA) voted by 72% to propose the adoption of the Belhar Confession as a fourth standard of unity at Synod 2012.

Christian Courier asked Dr. John Bolt and Shiao Chong to respond to the Belhar's consideration by answering six questions posed by the editorial team in a series of six features over three months.

Either choice may cause division

Shiao Chong

As I have written in my second installment to this series, the main consideration in adopting any confession should be faithfulness to the gospel's integrity. Everything else is secondary. In regards to the above questions, I would like to add the question of what are the implications of the CRC's ties to those Reformed denominations that *have* adopted the Belhar Confession if the CRC choose not to adopt it?

As of April 2010, two of our closest North American Reformed denominations have either already adopted or are seriously considering adopting the Belhar. The Reformed Church in America (RCA) has announced this month that 32 of its 46 classes have voted in favor of adopting the Belhar. Hence, the RCA will officially adopt the Belhar as its fourth con-

fession in its 2010 General Synod. In 2008 the Presbyterian Church USA (PCUSA) began the formal process of including the Belhar as one of its confessions with a committee reporting to their General Assembly in 2010. In Europe, the United Protestant Church in Belgium has also adopted the Belhar Confession. The Dominican Reformed Church (in the Dominican Republic), founded in partnership with the RCA, also adopted the Belhar in 2007. Hence, what are the implications for the CRC's relationship to these denominations, and the RCA and the PCUSA especially, if it does not adopt the Belhar Confession?

Weighing the options

I cannot foresee the future, and I am no expert in inter-denominational relations. But logically, it can negatively impact our relationships, improve our relationships (which is unlikely) or not make a difference at all. These three possibilities also exist for the opposite scenario: if the CRC adopts the Belhar, how would it impact its rela-

tions with those denominations that reject the Belhar? So, the choice is no longer one of changing our relations or staying status quo. Either choice – adopting or rejecting the Belhar as a confession – can change our relations with some of our denominational cousins.

Again, I am no soothsayer but my sense is that, in due time, there will probably be more Reformed denominations adopting the Belhar than rejecting it. I get this sense from looking at the developments of the World Alliance of Reformed Churches (WARC) and the Reformed Ecumenical Council (REC), two global networks of Reformed denominations. The CRC is a member of both organizations. In fact, both these networks will formally merge into a new World Communion of Reformed Churches (WCRC) this June in Grand Rapids, Michigan.

The constitution of this new WCRC includes a commitment to "promoting economic and ecological justice, global peace, and reconciliation in the world"¹ as well as promoting human rights, sustainable development, and the eradication of poverty, among other things. In addition, the Joint Working Group of the REC-WARC merger called the new body to commit itself to justice as "an important value and emphasis for the World Communion of Reformed Churches".² In other words, I see the Belhar's themes of unity, reconciliation and justice being championed or taken up by this new World Communion of Reformed Churches, of which virtually every Reformed denomination in the world will be a part of.

Growing support

Furthermore, the existence of the Accra Confession also suggests that worldwide Reformed sentiment is shifting towards reflecting the Belhar's themes. The WARC wrote and adopted the Accra Confession in its 24th General Council (2004) in Accra, Ghana (hence, its name). It is based on "the theological conviction that the economic and ecological injustices of today's global economy require the Reformed family to respond as a matter of faith in the Gospel of Jesus Christ."³ The Accra Confession focuses on economic justice, ecological destruction, and covenanting for justice. Since the CRC is a member of the WARC, in some sense we were involved in the adoption of the Accra Confession. This confession will also be seriously considered by the new WCRC.

See Chong on page 14



See Bolt on page 14

Home & Family

From Toddlers to Teens

by Denise Dykstra



Coping with adolescents

I recently had the privilege of working one-on-one with some Grade 11 English students. As we sat together tweaking their creative essays, I couldn't help being impressed with how well-mannered they were. Each of the students was courteous, attentive and respectful. It made me wonder how often their parents got to see that side of them.

It's no secret that teenagers can be difficult to live with. Typical adolescent behaviour includes moodiness, hypersensitivity and irrational thinking. This shouldn't come as a surprise to any of us. Physical, social and emotional changes mark this developmental stage of a child's life, and each of these changes is confusing.

Unfortunately, many parents respond to the frustration of living with a teen by distancing themselves from their child in an effort to avoid the conflict he or she causes. They feel helpless in the face of their teenager's insolence, so they tell themselves their child is grown up and no longer needs them. Or the opposite occurs: parents engage in constant battles with their teenage child because they feel their child's very character is at stake. Or, alternately, and even worse, parents decide their child's character is already so flawed it is beyond repair, and they give up on their teenager entirely.

All of these reactions are examples of what parents of teens ought *not* to do. What they can do is make an effort to understand

what their child is going through. Being an understanding parent is especially important during the teenage years – just when it's the most difficult to do.

Behind the behaviour

When teens act up, it's helpful if the parents investigate the reason behind the behaviour. It may be something specific – lack of sleep, a fight with a friend – or something more general. Teens are hard at work creating their own identities and separating from their parents. That move from childhood to adulthood can be pretty stressful.

It won't always be easy to figure out the root cause of a behaviour. Teens themselves often don't even realize what is going on. In that case, parents could turn their focus inward. They could ask themselves: what is it my teen is not getting from me? What does he or she need right now that I am missing?

I'm not saying that parents take their teen's behaviour personally. Definitely not. Feeling sad or angry will only make the situation worse. It doesn't help either to attribute the teen's behavior to him or her personally. Instead, they could look closely at their parenting style, making sure it accommodates for a self-sufficient child who still needs a strong relationship with his parents. They can focus on guiding their child and encouraging him. They can spend time trying to strengthen their connection with their teen.



We found we had to shift our parenting style when our two oldest kids became teenagers. So far it seems to be working. (I'll let you know if that's still the case once we get through the next three kids!) Our number one change: we listen more. With our younger kids, we make decisions on our own. With our teens, we work to validate them by taking into account their opinion.

A few tips

When my husband and I get into an argument with our teens, we try to hear them out. If what they say makes sense, we consider it – we figure we have nothing to lose by changing our minds. But if what they say isn't reasonable, we end the discussion and stay with our original decision. The key

words here: end the discussion. By going on and on we teach our kids we want to be in control. And the scene invariably switches from the issue at hand to a battle of wills. It's much more effective to discuss the argument after the fact when we're all calmed down.

Another thing my husband and I do is treat each teenage act of rebellion as an isolated incident. We remind ourselves that the arguments may come often, and they may come close together, but they're still isolated. They're not who our child is. And they won't last forever.

At the same time, we try to spend lots of time with our teens doing fun things. We let them know we understand how difficult it is to make the transition from comfortable dependence to the unknown of independence. We assure them that in the midst of the turmoil we'll stick with them – no matter what. God doesn't give up on us when we fail; it's the least we can do for them.

Showing grace to a child in his or her teen years isn't always easy, but it is worth the effort. Being an understanding parent will help you come out of the battle with your relationship with your teen alive. ➤

Denise Dykstra (dykstras@telus.net) lives in Edmonton, Alberta. She's a writer and mother of five.



Intangible Things

Heidi VanderSlikke

Clearing the clutter

Usually the sight of sunshine streaming through a winter's worth of filth on the windows launches me into spring cleaning. But this year it was my family that inadvertently sparked the irresistible urge to purge the accumulated clutter and excess dirt.

As I walked around the farm with my daughters on Good Friday evening, I mentioned to them the "closet of doom." In the years since my son left home, I've used his former closet as a catch-all for such indispensable treasures as my Olivetti electronic typewriter, the world's largest collection of slightly used gift bags and scraps of wrapping paper and boxes upon boxes of my mother's household effects.

When we got back to the house I retreated to the kitchen to prepare food for the next day's Easter feast. Stephanie and Jessica disappeared into James' old bedroom and eagerly yanked open the folding doors to reveal my nightmare storage space.

Non-sentimental helpers

A half hour later I ventured downstairs. The floor looked like a yard sale had exploded. Stephanie unpacked china cups and saucers while Jessica sat flipping through old photographs. A string of bright red beads adorned her neck. I smiled and said, "You always went straight for Oma's

jewelry box when you were little and pulled those out. You'd wear them the whole time we visited."

"I don't remember that," she said. "But Stephanie told me. These are back in style you know."

"What do I do with all this stuff?" I said. "I can't bear to throw it away, but I have tons of my own china and crystal." I returned to peeling potatoes and whipping up dessert.

From time to time I went back to the room, told the girls a story about some treasure they'd discovered and speculated about gift bags possibly multiplying themselves. I tried not to look into the boxes they had designated as trash. By the end of the evening they had claimed some memorabilia for themselves, organized my remaining junk and unloaded two-thirds of the closet's contents into the dumpster, where it belonged.

As I admired the newly tidy closet, I realized that it was the tip of the iceberg. My office looked like a war zone. Papers obscured the horizontal surface of my desk and the bookshelves nearly sagged from be-



ing overloaded. The last time I had attempted decluttering in there, I ended up lying on my back on the floor, staring up at the shelves, wondering where to begin. I closed the door and walked away.

Oh those memories!

The next day as I basted the turkey, Jack enlisted the help of all our children to move an old wall unit down to the basement. We had agreed that its empty shelves would be perfect to store off-season coveralls and parkas. But I hadn't planned to face that task yet. While they were down there he had them take an old living-room chair out to the trash bin.

What was he trying to do to me?! Yes, the chair was worn out and ugly. But I wasn't ready to let it go. It had sat in the basement for three years. Why the rush? Did he not realize all the memories bound up in that threadbare upholstery?

I avoided the basement for the remainder of the weekend. By Monday morning I could no longer resist its silent call for cleaning. I jammed garbage bags full of useless paraphernalia into the now bulging dumpster.

How many frozen yogurt containers (with lids!) does one really need to keep? I piled some "good stuff" together to donate to the local second-hand store.

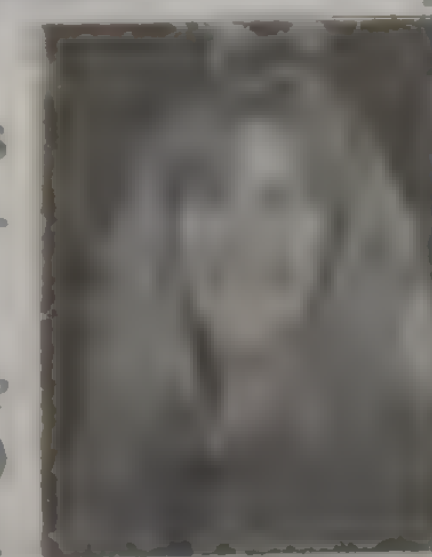
By Tuesday afternoon the basement was clean and orderly. The office beckoned. I had no idea how liberating it could be to toss out multiple sheets of return address labels with my name on them, or to give away dozens of books I enjoyed but will likely never read again.

Weeks later, I stood washing dishes, pondering the joy of reclaimed space in the lower half of the house, but well aware that the windows remained dirty. And there were plenty more closets to clean. By next spring the whole ordeal will need to be repeated. So what's the point? I caught myself drying another yogurt container; then tossed it out.

Maybe it's not so much about end results as it is about the ongoing process. I think Gordon MacDonald had it right when he wrote, "To bring order to one's personal life is to invite (Christ's) control over every segment of one's life."

I wonder if anybody has any use for a good electronic typewriter. ➤

Heidi VanderSlikke (vanderslikke@everus.ca) lives in Harriston, Ont.



Ecology/Life changes

Co-owning the Earth

Bert Hielema

Sin against the earth

I always have a number of books on the go, from easily-digested detective novels to philosophical-religious stuff. I sometimes read the latter three or four times, for the simple reason that I am a slow learner. One of my repeat-reads is *The Hidden Face of God*, by Dr Richard Elliot Friedman, an expert in Old Testament language but equally at home in the New Testament.

In the book, Prof. Friedman traces the disappearance of God and mentions that Jesus Christ always describes himself as “son of man,” a term that appears in the Hebrew Bible 109 times as *ben adam* which, he writes, simply means “human being.” It literally says “son of the earth.”

Dr Friedman also devotes a lot of space to Friedrich Nietzsche, the author of *Also Sprach Zarathustra* (Thus spake Zarathustra), from which he quotes a very peculiar passage: “To sin against the earth is now the most dreadful thing.” Nietzsche’s call to “be true to the earth” had a decisive influence on Bonhoeffer’s spiritual development as well. In his *Creation and Fall* he writes, “God, brother and sister, and the earth belong together. This means that sinning against the earth is the same as sinning against one’s neighbour.”

Think about that for a minute: “To sin against the earth is the most dreadful thing!” It reminds me of Psalm 51:4 “O wash me more and more from my guilt and cleanse me from my sin,” and (6) “Against you, you alone have I sinned.”

Western apathy

The passage makes eminent sense to me. We confess that God made the earth. That makes the earth holy. This earth, says Romans 8, is now deeply suffering from the sins we commit against it. Especially we Westerners sin against the earth continuously. I see it as an offense against “Sovereign Power.” It is doubly curious that, although a majority of North Americans still believe global warming is real, that percentage is falling, with the lowest number among conservative Christians. Global warming, or perhaps more accurately Global “weirding,” is a direct consequence of sinning against the earth.

If I am correct in my reasoning, then the churches should be in the forefront of advocating measures that stop or at least lessen the dangers of climate change. They should forcefully agitate against pollution and practice all means of conservation, perhaps even promote house churches to cut back on driving and maintaining a large building used only a few hours per week.

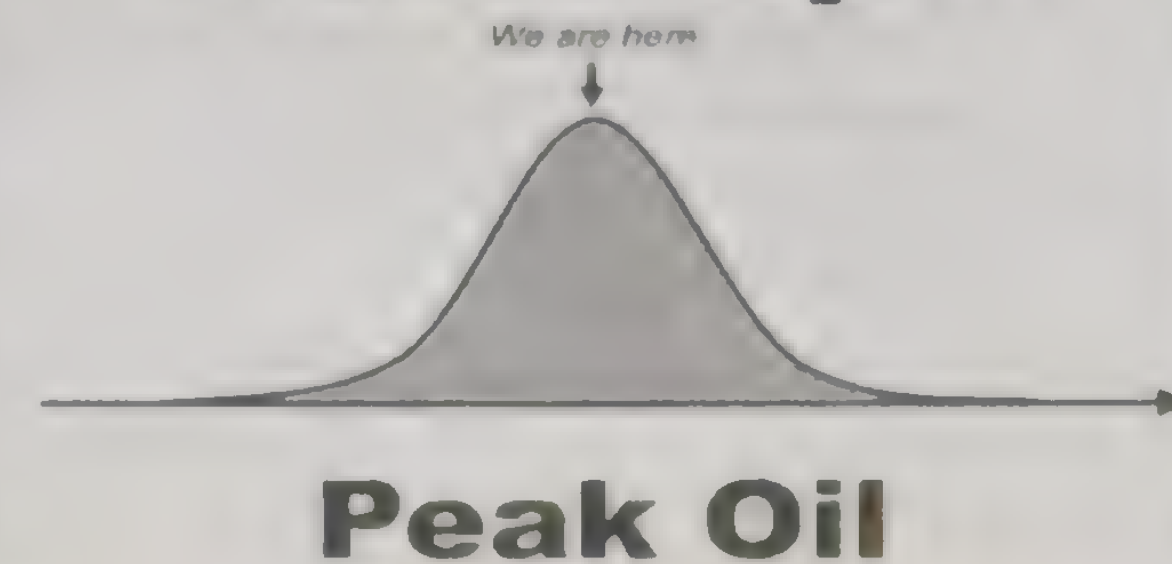
I know I am powerless to make people change their minds about anything, including environmental issues: no level of evidence can shake the grow-

ing belief that climate science is a giant conspiracy cooked up by fanatics like me and governments to tax and control us. I cannot change people’s views. Even Jesus, in spite of all his miracles, was killed because he did not buy into the one thing that people wanted: a Davidic-like Israel and deliverance from the Roman oppressor.

End times

Today I see a striking paradox: now that Jesus is soon to establish his earthly Kingdom, the New Creation, for which we pray every time we recite “Thy Kingdom come,” the overwhelming belief in the larger church is that heaven is our destination, and not this earth. To believe otherwise would entail treating this earth

Wake up!!!



as God’s domain, and an admission that we effectively co-own this earth. That would rob us of our temporary easy life, made possible by abundant fuel supplies, now on the verge of disappearing.

Yes, Peak Oil peeks around the corner. New studies show that peak oil is due in 2014. Kuwaiti scientists have updated oil predictions previously based on the famous Hubbert model, which had correctly predicted in 1956 that U.S. oil reserves would peak within 20 years. The new multi-cycle Hubbert Model, used by the Kuwaiti scientists evaluated oil production trends of 47 major oil-producing countries, showing how many countries have already hit their peak including Canada, the U.S., Mexico, Russia, Norway, the U.K., China, Iran, and Indonesia. Another report was published last month by the U.K. Taskforce on Peak Oil and Energy Security. Britain, of course, will have parliamentary elections in May, and the authors noted that the next government is likely to be dealing with declining oil production, to start by 2014. Peak oil, by the way, is the point in time when the maximum rate of global petroleum extraction is reached, after which the rate of production enters terminal decline.

In future columns I will try to picture what life would be like with an ever-shrinking oil supply.



Bert Hielema (bert@hielem.ca) had a successful maple-syrup season: a lot of work, but the result was sweet. His blog is 'hielem.ca'



John Tamming

Your sermon was doctrinally accurate. It was exceedingly well delivered. It touched on all aspects of the text. However, it was for the most part a collection of ripe clichés and I found it dull.

Thus did a certain professor of preaching deliver the stiletto into the abundant ego of one of our seminarians. (“You should have seen Plantinga take him down” was the talk afterwards in the coffee shop, aspiring clergy numbering among the most thorough of gossips.)

The retirement of Professor Neal Plantinga as President of Calvin Seminary is a hard blow to that institution. If this anecdote suggests rudeness, that would be wrong. If it suggests a certain toughness in a matter of great import (the act of incarnating God in words), such was its intent.

Doubtless, the reasons for his retirement are coherent – more time for the fiddle, and the links, and he may perhaps have another book or two in him. We will hear from him again.

But his appointment as president signaled something at the time: that the seminary board was ready to move beyond the mediocrity which had filled its lecture halls for too long. This was, after all, the place that said no to tenure for Lewis Smedes. This was the building where one warm spring afternoon, a student walked to the classroom window, lifted the screen and jumped into the seminary pond: anything to kill the boredom.

Mel Hugen had interesting things to say about pastoral care. So did several others. Other profs were locked into a Bavinck-cum-Harrison time warp and utterly lacked the capacity to translate the gospel into, well, gospel. The institution did not shine as it might have because of a seminary board of directors which was less interested in being interesting than ploddingly safe. Plantinga singled a clear break from that and brought in professors to share the daylight.

You had a sense that he knew he had a sliver of time to make a serious impact in the lives of preachers and how they approach their craft.

Let your attitude be thus: I worked 24/7 on this sermon, and every corner of it shines. If you are very good, I will let you listen to it.

That over-the-top line was delivered with a smile, but no apology was made for its cockiness. It was a needed antidote to the self-defeating attitude that prevails in the mind of many seminarians (no one listens anyway, sermons are 19th century, people want their power point) and which has allowed mediocrity to flourish unrestrained in many pulpits.

A life’s worth of lessons

For those college students of my day, an AACs background could be a curse: you were hardwired to assume that campuses were full of philosophical land mines. Thus, you asked

Farewell to Neal Plantinga

whether a professor was safely within the Dooyeweerdian camp, not whether he or she was a particularly captivating lecturer (indeed, captivating could be a deadly lure, resulting in a class with, say, Nick Wolterstorff). Puzzled by his lack of zeal for Ridderbos et al, in my first year I asked Plantinga why he did not talk about the kingdom much in his lectures.

Because we no longer have kings, was the not so unintelligent response. *Why preach in language rooted in a medieval polity which the listener associates with fairy tales?* Why indeed.

As if to drive home the point, later that month he spoke to hundreds of ministers gathered for an annual conference. There he gently mocked the reformational preaching cum sloganeering of my youth and purported to end a sermon with the line, *Therefore, Brothers and Sisters, let us together form Christian labour unions.* He brought down the house.

He taught us that to be interesting is not a matter of the left or the right. There are progressive preachers who are insufferable and there are orthodox ministers who can nail a metaphor better than Atwood.

The singular gift Plantinga provided to a generation of students was this: preaching still matters, and here’s how it can be done right. As to proof of its relevance, the pews are full of those who want to hear a message. As to the mechanics of getting it done, two rules: be true, and be interesting. During my stay in Grand Rapids, he was one of three preachers that could consistently deliver the homiletical goods (Reverends John Timmer and Jack Roeda were the others).

The lessons were many. Claim the time from your church to be good. Tell them you cannot be good two sermons a week, week in, week out. Rather than prattle on seminarian style about the curse of money, talk to a salesman about how hard it can be to make a buck, and it might just inform your sermon. Put the *Banner* away for a time and read *Psychology Today* – read something about the brain and impulse control that might guide your interpretation of Paul. Flannery O’Connor? By all means. Buy an alarm clock, set it for 5:30 a.m., get into the study by 7 and stop reading the paper until 9 (this last one was from Stek, but too good to omit).

This ode may seem a little odd. I have not seen the good professor since I graduated 25 years ago. I pocketed my M.Div., changed course and did not pursue the ministry. But he is simply by far the most interesting Christian academic I have ever encountered, and I wished to give him his beautiful due.

Ad vitam paramus.

John A. Tamming is a graduate of Calvin College and Calvin Seminary, who practices civil litigation in Owen Sound.



Society

THE PUBLIC SQUARE

Harry Antonides

Miss Debbie discovers a pearl

One would be hard put to find a more unlikely partnership than that of Ron Hall, a rich white American, and Denver Moore, a penniless, illiterate black man. But in 2006 they wrote the book, *Same Kind of Different As Me*, telling the amazing story of their lives.

The two men first met in 1998 at a Christian outreach to the homeless, the Union Gospel Mission in Fort Worth, Texas. The person who played a major role in bringing them together was Deborah, Ron's wife who was convinced that God called her to minister to the homeless.

She gave herself unselfishly in reaching out to the poorest of the poor, always treating everyone she met with respect and love. She looked behind the surface of failure and dysfunction, and saw gifts, such as love, faith, and wisdom, hidden like pearls waiting to be discovered, as she put it.

A woman with a vision

Deborah had a vision of making the mission a place where men and women did not just come for a meal or a bed, but where they experienced the love of God in very practical ways. She also saw something very special in Denver Moore, who began to visit the mission where she worked. She urged her husband to go out of his way to befriend Denver.

It was not easy for Hall to break through the wall that this sullen, angry black man had built around himself. But with perseverance and wisdom Ron succeeded in convincing Denver that he meant to be a real friend, then to discover that the Bible-centered, down-to-earth wisdom that Denver possessed would become a blessing to him, especially in times of loss and heartbreak.

And such a time arrived when Deborah contracted colon cancer and, after a 19-month painful treatment, died in November 2000 at the age of 55. It was especially during Debo-

rah's struggle with cancer, her death, and burial that Denver became a rich source of comfort and spiritual stamina to Ron and his family, and to all who had come to love Deborah.

At the memorial service the day after the funeral, Denver Moore delivered a moving speech explaining how God had blessed him through Miss Debbie who had reached out to him in love when no one had cared about him. He told his audience that he had promised God to pick up her torch in caring for the homeless. Many were in tears and gave him a standing ovation.

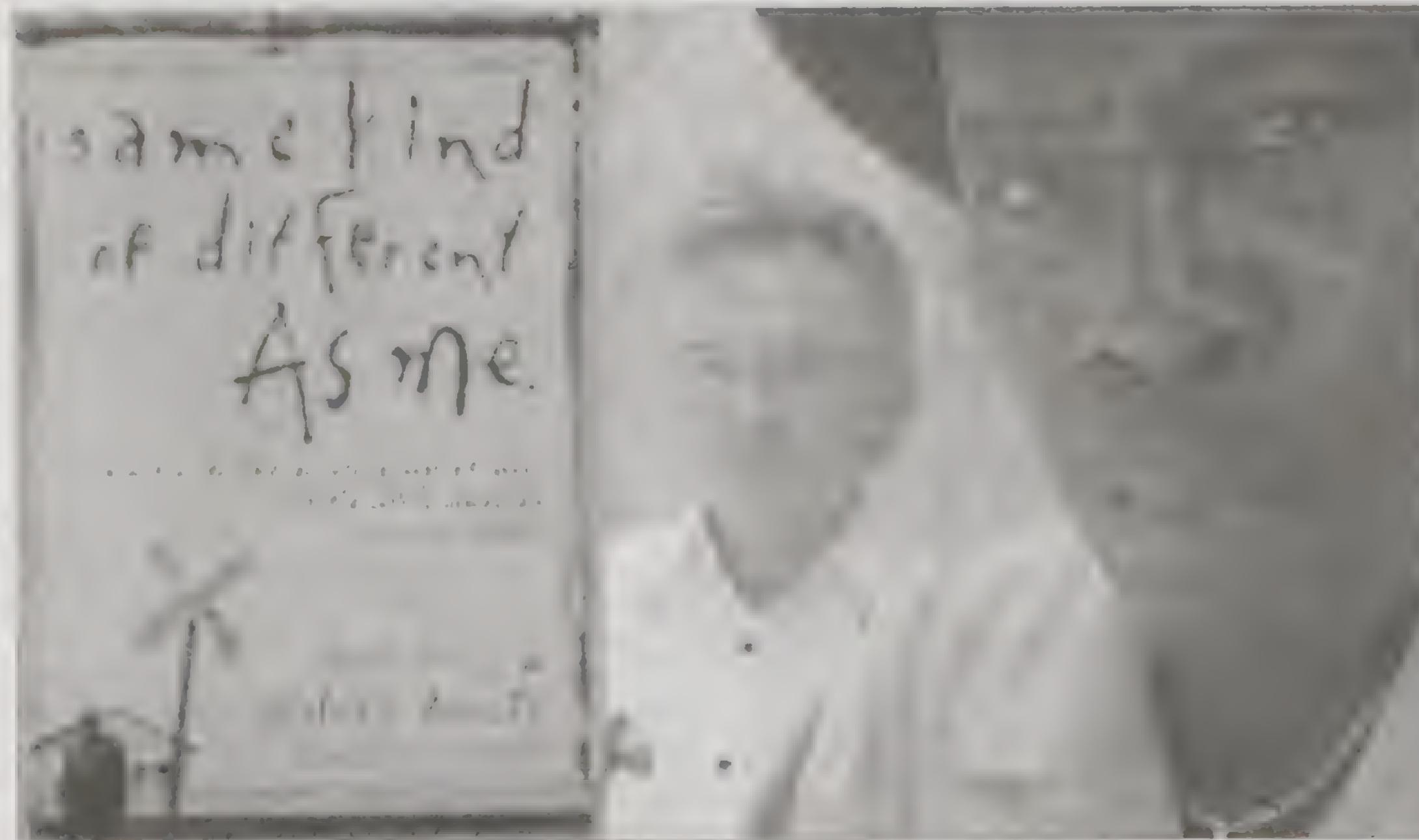
Need for a book

Shortly before her death, Deborah urged her husband: "Don't give up on Denver. God is going to bless your friendship in a way you can never imagine." Subsequent developments proved her to be right—again.

One day Denver told Ron: "Ain't nobody ever gonna believe our story. We need to write us a book."

And so they did, but could not find a publisher willing to take on this project. So they self-published 50 copies for a small audience. But in 2006 the publishing firm Thomas Nelson decided to publish it, and they arranged for Lynn Vincent to help with the final editing.

Demand for the book quickly skyrocketed. By October 2009, 590,000 copies had been printed, and it had been on the NYT



best-sellers list for 80 consecutive weeks—the first time this happened in the company's entire history.

The result was overwhelming. Request for speaking engagements became an avalanche. As of late last year the two authors have told their story more than 500 times and visited more than 200 shelters in America. They helped raise \$32 million for the homeless through their speeches and other fund-raising engagements.

Just workin our way home

From a life touched by tragedy and begun as a modern-day plantation slave, nameless and homeless, Denver's life changed radically by the healing power of God channeled through the faith and kindness of Deborah and Ron Hall.

Today, Denver is an artist (painting), public speaker, and advocate of the homeless. In 2006, the citizens of Fort Worth honoured him as "Philanthropist of the Year" for his work at the Union Gospel Mission. He has had to slow down after suffering a stroke and undergoing brain surgery.

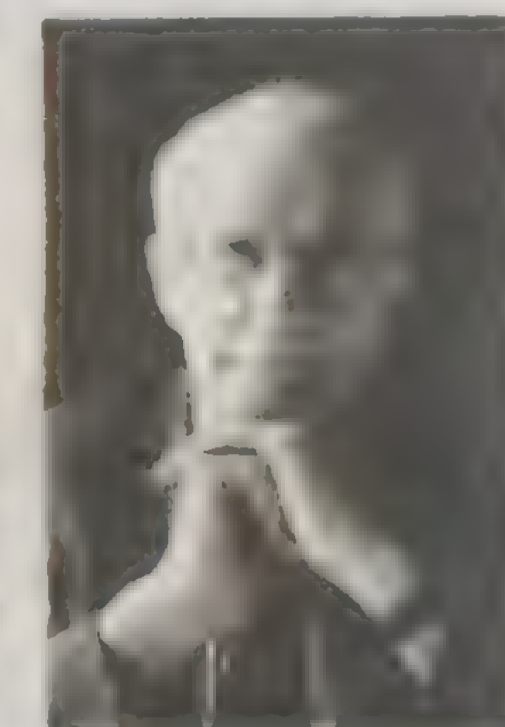
Denver concludes his final chapter explaining that he used to worry quite a bit about being different from everyone else. He writes:

But I found out everybody's different — the same kind of different as me. We're all just regular folks walkin down the road God done set in front of us.

The truth about it is, whether we is rich or poor or somethin in between, this earth ain't no final restin place, So in a way we is all homeless — just workin our way toward home.

In a world where more and more cracks are appearing in the fabric of our society, this book is a refreshing story of hope and reconciliation. After you read it, you will never again look the same way at the homeless.

Harry Antonides (hantonides@sympatico.ca) retired as director of the former Work Research Foundation. He lives in Willowdale, Ontario.



Bolt ... continued from p.11

fession, the WARC confession denouncing Western and especially American free-market economies, was rejected by the CRC's committee for ecumenical relations. Thankfully so. the Accra Confession is indeed over the top, but it is quite consistent with the WARC's clear tradition of "social justice" pronouncements. I believe that the Belhar is part of the same family of confessions. Consider once again a WARC working document statement for this summer's gathering to establish the new World Communion of Reformed Churches:

We must confess that we have not always been faithful to God in working for justice. Apartheid, other forms of racism, gender injustice, injustice in the economy and climate injustice are just a few of the areas in which churches have often found themselves complicit. We give thanks to God that we all agree that these injustices should not be

found in our churches. We are called upon to expose them and to work for justice. (WARC website:

http://warc.jalb.de/warc.jsp/side.jsp?news_id=2103&part_id=19&navi=6)

Yes, one could be concerned that we begin to trivialize church confessions when we multiply them, especially in order to make contentious political pronouncements. My concern is every bit as much with politicizing confessions as it is with multiplying them. The Belhar, so it seems to me, suffers on both accounts.

Dr. John Bolt is a professor of systematic theology at Calvin Seminary.



Note: The Belhar debates can be found on our website. Click on the Reader Resources link and see Features.

Chong ... continued from p.11

Regardless of the Accra Confession's merits or demerits, the point here is that I see the tide of change probably favoring the Belhar Confession as being more likely to be adopted by more denominations in the future than being rejected. If that is the case, then if the CRC rejects the Belhar, it could, in the long term, be part of a minority group that currently includes the Dutch Reformed Church in South Africa (DRCSA) that perpetuated apartheid. How would that affect the CRC's standing among the global Reformed community?

Other serious questions come to mind. In a North American continent that is already multi-cultural and will become more so, what would be the court of public opinion's verdict on the CRC if it rejects the Belhar Confession? Would the public confuse the CRC's position with the DRCSA? Would such public perception hinder the CRC's efforts at making disciples from all nations?

Finally, is opening ourselves up to considering additional confessions, like the Accra, a problem? Although I am not advocating that we should add ever more confessions, would more confessions from different historical and cultural contexts giving us multiple reformed perspectives be a bad thing?

In any case, as I have said before, we consider confessions based on their faithfulness to the gospel's integrity. Does the Belhar fulfill this criterion? I think it does. Are there weaknesses in the Belhar? Yes, but no more than the weaknesses in our current three confessions. In my humble opinion, I believe the Belhar Confession is faithful to the gospel's integrity, useful and important for us in 21st century North America, and probably will gain support from the international Reformed community.

Endnotes

- 1 From Article 5 "Mission and Purposes", of the WARC Constitution. This can be found at the website: <http://www.reformedchurches.org/docs/Constitution-English.pdf>
- 2 From the REC's website: <http://www.recweb.org/index.php?action=view&id=88&module=newsmodule&src=@random41940a897e943>
- 3 From the WARC website: http://warc.jalb.de/warc.jsp/side.jsp?news_id=1157&navi=45

Shiao Chong is the Christian Reformed Campus Minister serving at York University in Toronto.



Review/ Transitions

Growing Up Christian



Growing Up Christian: Why Young People Stay in Church, Leave Church and (Sometimes) Come Back to Church, by John P. Bowen
2010, Regent College Publishing

Reviewed by Sophie Vandenberg

In *Growing Up Christian*, John Bowen sets out to determine why some promising young Christian leaders leave the faith while others persevere. Using the words of young people themselves, the book offers valuable insights into how Christian communities can encourage the next generation to develop a faith that will sustain them for the long haul.

Bowen, who was a longtime staff worker with Intervarsity Christian Fellowship (an interdenominational ministry to universities and high schools), surveyed hundreds of young people who “grew up Christian.” He retells their stories about how growing up and leaving home affected their faith. This readable book considers those who remained active in their faith and church, the path of those who left and “absent believers” — those who left the church but not the faith.

Over the course of nearly two decades, Bowen worked with 1,200 teens in the context of the Leadership Training Program at Intervarsity’s Pioneer Camp. His respondents, drawn from this body, came from a

variety of denominations including Baptist, Anglican, Christian Reformed, various types of evangelicals and some Roman Catholics.

Ninety eight per cent of his respondents ended up going to university. He writes, “This is important to know, because the impact of university on a person’s faith, for good or for ill, is far-reaching and long-lasting.”

Transitions

“Loyal Believers” (those who are still active in their faith and have never been away from it) identified the Christian community — especially mentors — as topping the list of factors that had upheld them in the faith. Mentors, who were rated second only to “my relationship with God,” seemed to help young people with the transition from a “family faith” to “personal faith.” One Loyal Believer wrote, “Mentors have been one of the strongest messengers of God’s grace.”

Loyal Believers also tended to reveal an awareness that faith changes and develops. “I continue to reconsider the way I believe,” wrote one respondent. Rather than rejecting the faith as it came up against new challenges and questions, Loyal Believers were able to reinterpret it.

As for the “Former Believers” (those who no longer call themselves Christian), the majority gave up on their faith between the ages of 18 and 22 — the university years. The exclusiveness of the Christian faith was identified as this group’s strongest concern. Bowen notes that this was also a significant issue for Loyal Believers, though not enough to push them away from the faith.

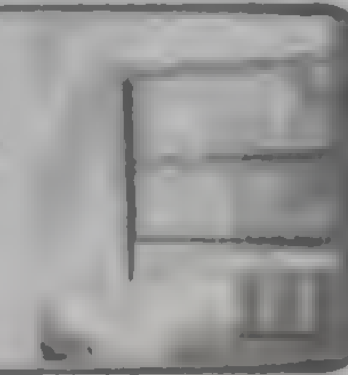
Life after church

Bowen suggests that it may be helpful for young people to be exposed to the thinking of traditional Christians such as C.S. Lewis, who has affirmed the truth in other religions even though he still saw Jesus as unique. Bowen posits that Loyal Believers were perhaps able, like Lewis, to discover less exclusive ways of thinking about this question.

Former Believers also expressed frustration at the unwillingness of their church or family to discuss difficult questions; whole areas of inquiry were closed off to them. A

My window seat

Mendelt Hoekstra



I was happily married before, but cancer cut that shorter than I expected. Next month Marisa and I would have celebrated 12 years of marriage. Sadly, the last anniversary we shared and enjoyed was our 9th.

In some ways marriage is easier now. I’m 36, my perspective is shaped and where it should be, my career is stable, I have more than \$14.00 in the bank and I’ve seen and felt God’s hand lead me through what I thought would have been an unmanageable darkness.

But in some ways it is more difficult and complex now. When I was married and still a full-time student at 23, I felt I could conquer the world, I had an endless amount of energy and nothing could stand in our way; our love would pay the bills. I’m more often tired at 36. I have three children. 9:30 P.M. no longer means getting ready to go out; it now, on most nights, means getting ready for bed.

I met Shannon at a grief group. Her husband was killed 6 years ago by a drunk driver. She was two months pregnant at the time with their second child. The last six years she has shepherded her two boys through life, delivery, grief, sadness and remembrance. Her youngest has never seen his father’s face or heard his father’s voice. Yet, through the grace of God and the brilliance of community her two boys are good, fun kids. Yes, two kids. Two plus three equals five children, one short of the Brady Bunch. But if you take in consideration “generational deflation,” five kids is the new ten. I think we might need a maid like Alice.

It’s different

The kids are excited. When I asked my eight-year-old’s blessing on getting married, he was thrilled to inherit two brothers along with his two sisters. His sisters don’t

Mendelt Hoekstra (mendelt.hoekstra@gmail.com) is the founder and director of the Music Therapy program at Bethesda, an organization that supports adults with developmental possibilities. He lives near St. Catharines, Ont. with his three children.

I’m getting married again. I’m getting re-married. I’m getting married.

“hunt for frogs enough” according to him. He did ask me with a serious face, “Are you sure Shannon wants to marry you?”

Family get-togethers are bigger now. I know it isn’t easy for the families of our spouses to see us marry because it shows that life continues when sometimes we don’t want it to. Yet again, through grace, we have their blessing. Our children now have seven grandparents and have each inherited ten new aunts and uncles. Grandparents day at school is sure to impress.

Marrying someone who had lost a spouse is a marriage of three hearts, and in our case four. I will continue to love and miss Marisa. Shannon will continue to love and miss Michael. Now that Shannon and I are together, we are not “fixed,” our grief is not over, on pause or stopped. We will continue to remember and continue to grieve. We will continue to teach and remind our five children (ages 4, 5, 6, 7, and 8) about Marisa and Michael and how we are better people, how in turn they are better children, because of the love we shared before and after death. We will continue to teach that sin can be nasty, evil and terrible but that love can outstretch sin, show holiness and be restorative.

Our love for each other needed to transcend suffering because, although we had that in common, it could only take us so far. We needed to, and do, believe that the path God prepared for us is exactly that, a path for us. We believe that his love is wider, deeper and stronger than anything else. We believe that love is stronger than death, including tragic, unavoidable death through an incomprehensible choice to drive drunk and a life-draining, unsanitized disease.

In spite of the grief and sorrow over what has been lost, we are experiencing great joy. And anticipating a large grocery bill.

rigid faith did not serve these young people well as they came up against the complexities of life.

“Absent Believers” (those who still consider themselves Christian but have dropped out of church) were distinguished from Loyal Believers by the facts that they were much less likely to have had spiritual mentors and had dramatically fewer Christian friends. Bowen notes, however, that many are involved in “church substitutes” such as social outreach activities and small groups.

What are these and many other young people looking for? Bowen writes that they are hoping for reasonable things: a group of followers of Jesus who cultivate a warm and open community, places where they can consider issues of truth and be active

in service, and worship (in whatever form it takes) that is done with excellence and includes thoughtful preaching.

The voices of the young people cited by Bowen offer invaluable clues to those of us who wish to help young people transition to adult faith as they navigate the complexities of life. *Growing Up Christian* will be a helpful resource for parents, teachers, youth workers, campus ministers, pastors and anyone who has a heart for the raising the next generation of the faithful.

Sophie is a writer who lives in Norval, Ontario



Classifieds

Marriages

*With gratitude and thankfulness
to our Lord and Saviour,
Rennie Feddema
and
Wietze William Luinstra
plan to be united in marriage,
Lord willing, on June 5, 2010
at 3 p.m. in Westmount Christian
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Eric & Evelina Hartemink and Clarence & Lois Deelstra
announce the upcoming marriage of their children

Evelyn Grace Hartemink
and
John Dennis Deelstra

The wedding will take place on Monday, May 24 at
2:30 p.m. in the Aylmer Christian Reformed Church

Anniversaries

50th Wedding Anniversary
1960 - May 21 - 2010

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his blessings through you for 50 years

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Anniversaries

*50th Wedding Anniversary of
Bert and Henny Schaly*



*We hereby invite you to our Open House
celebrating our*

*50th Wedding Anniversary
Saturday, May 29, 2010
New Lowell Legion
7:00 pm to 10:00 p.m.*

*Because God has blessed us richly, we will therefore gratefully receive
donations for Cheryl & Donna Pridham who are missionaries in Africa.
They run the Widows Training School in Jos, Nigeria.*

Bert & Henny Schaly, 5319 Con 5 RR1, New Lowell ON L0M 1N0

Obituaries

ANTJE (ANK) VANDEN ENDE- HOEKSEMA

"But as for me, it is good to be near God..." Psalm 73:28
Having lived a full life of loving service and after patient suffering and
courageous battle with cirrhosis of the liver, Ank surrendered to the call
of her Shepherd and Savior Jesus and went Home on Thursday,
April 15 at Strathroy Hospital, at the age of 81.

A private interment ceremony took place on Monday, April 19
at Forest Lawn Cemetery, London, after which a
Memorial service was held at Westmount CRC, Strathroy
Beloved wife of 55 years of marriage with Anthonie Vanden Ende, retired pastor
Lovingly remembered by her 6 children:

Tony, Cambridge, ON Henk (Janet), Samia, ON
Jack (Cheryl), Cary, NC. John (Betty), Huntsville, ON
Arja (Gerry Pot), Keswick Ridge, NB Tim (Charlene), Wainfleet, ON
and 20 grandchildren and 9 great-grandchildren.

"My song forever shall record the tender mercies of the Lord."

Correspondence: Rev. A. Vanden Ende
102 - 400 Dominion Street, Strathroy ON N7G 3G8
Email: toonank@bell.net phone 519 246 1705

December 6, 1916 — April 11, 2010
Groningen, Netherlands Kingston, Ontario

John 11:26-26 Jesus said, "I am the resurrection and the life
He who believes in me will live, even though he dies;
and whoever lives and believes in me will never die."

"JANE" JANTINA HILBERDINK (nee Sibma)

At the age of 93, Mom/Grammie went home to be with her Lord and Saviour
She was predeceased in 2004 by Dirk, her husband of 62 years
Loving mother of Dirk (Irene), Joe (Dallas), Jake (Didy), Florence (Dirk) VanderMeer
Cherished Grammie to 10 grandchildren,
13 great-grandchildren and 1 great, great-granddaughter
Also lovingly remembered by many family members in Holland

Funeral Service was held on April 15, 2010
at the First Christian Reformed Church in Kingston.

HELENA GRETHA HOVINGH

October 25, 1932 (Sneek, Friesland) — April 10, 2010 (Brampton ON)

Remembered by her children and grandchildren
Dita and Dirk
Albert and Betty

Hans and Esther — Maria and Brian, Aileen and Greg, Jonathon
Ernest and Malinda — Rebecca, Jessica, Mark
Marc and Lianne — Laura, Nathan, Elena, Sarah

O how glorious and resplendent, full of health, and strong, and free,
fragile body, shalt thou be, full of vigor, full of pleasure
when endued with heavenly beauty, that shall last eternally!

— Thomas à Kempis

Corresponding address: A. Hovingh 32 Park St. PO Box 364
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Dutch Service

will be held in the
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Rev. Herman Praamsma
will be preaching.



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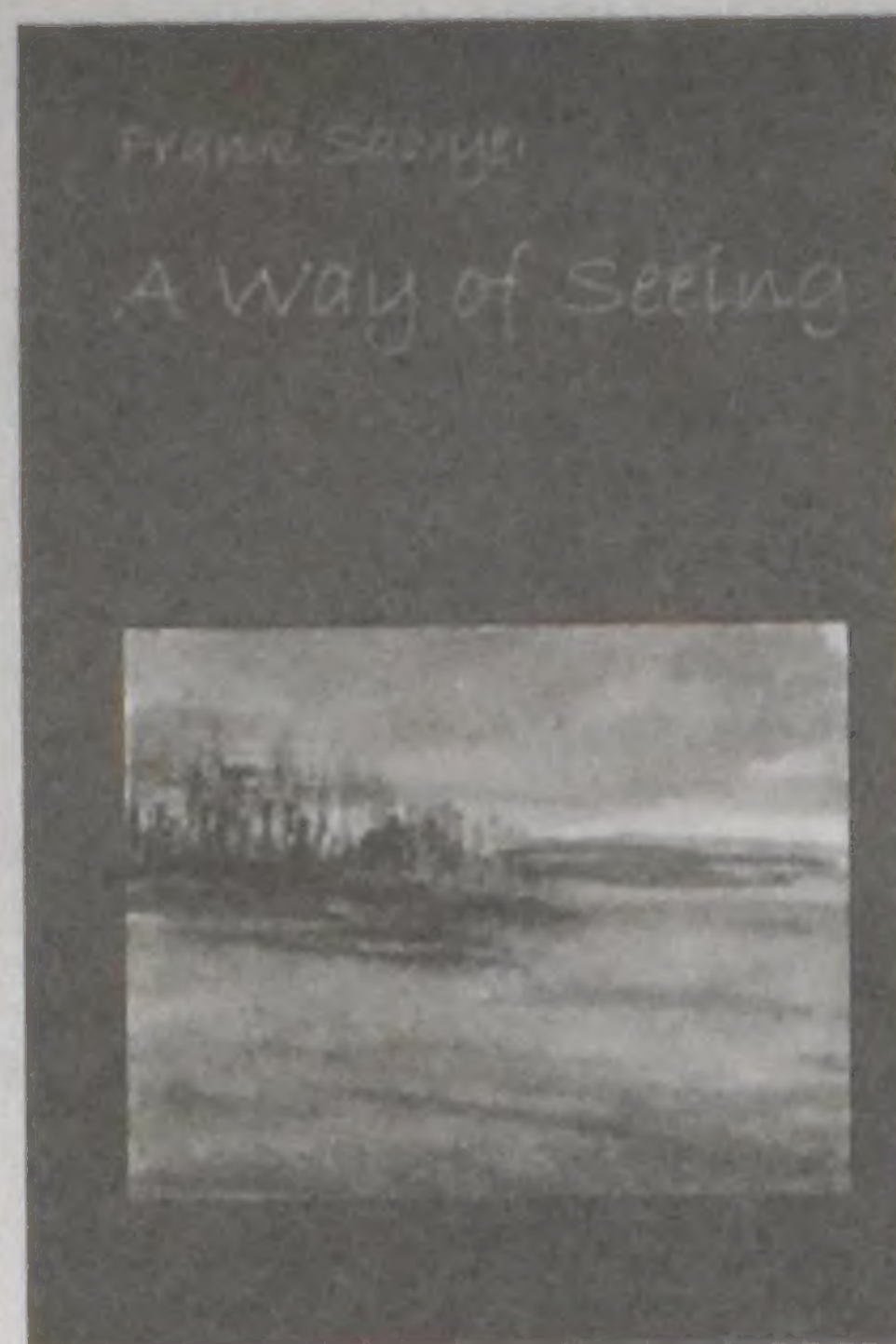
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**Hollandse Dag**

June 16

10:00 a.m. at

First Christian

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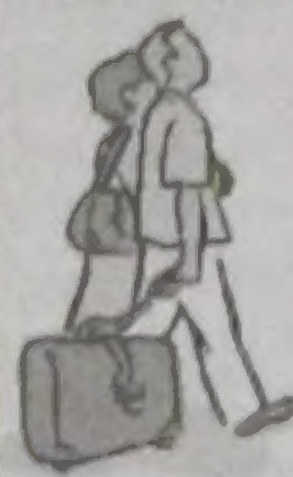
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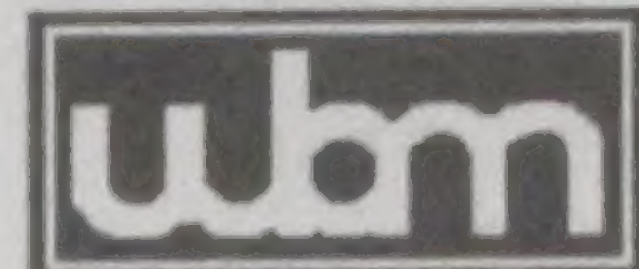
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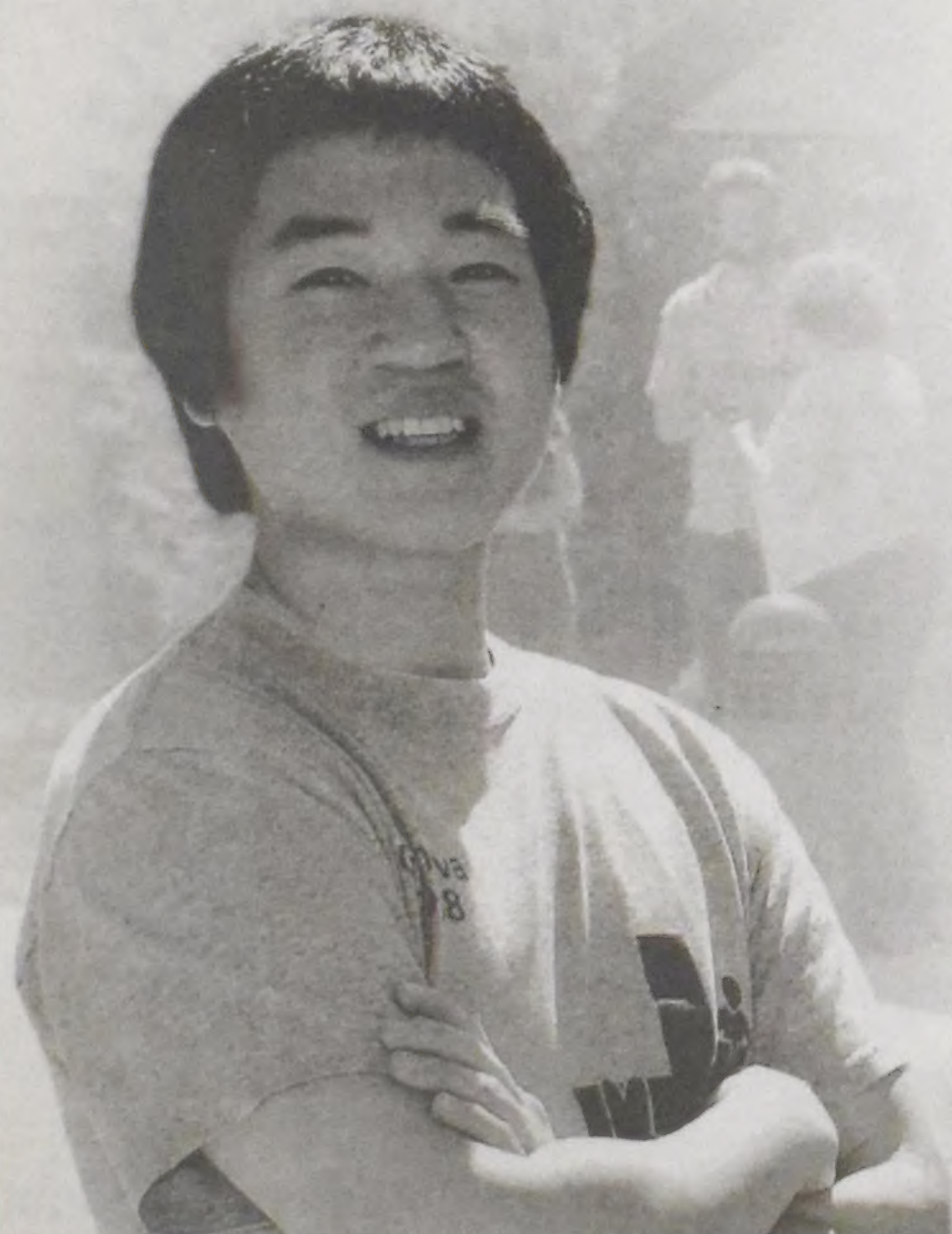
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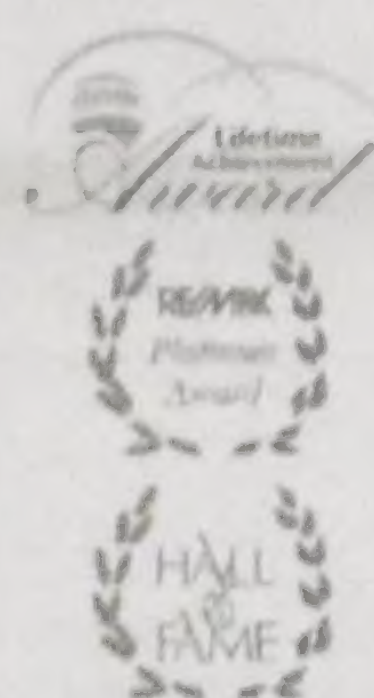
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Events/Advertising

CALENDAR OF EVENTS

May 12 The Ambassadors Male Chorus will present a program together with the Rozenburg's Mannenkoor (Male Choir) at 8 p.m. in the Mnt Hamilton Christian Reformed Church, Upper Wellington & Stone Church Road, **Hamilton**, ON. Freewill collection to cover costs.

May 13 The Liberation Choir Presents, Liberation 65 Concert with guest organist Martin Mans of the Netherlands, and The Choraliers, all male chorus 7.30 p.m. Georgetown Christian Reformed Church, 11611 Trafalgar Road, **Georgetown**. For tickets contact Brian Bignell - 905.681.3776 or Lucy James - 905.877.8339. Tickets available at Bergsma's Paint and Wallpaper and at the door. For more information please visit www.liberationchoir.com

May 14-16 Dutch ancestry conference. See March 22 issue p. 21 for more details.

May 30 Dutch Service will be held in the Ancaster Christian Reformed Church at 3:00 p.m. Rev. Herman Praamsma will be preaching.

June 9 Hollandse Dag at the Moorefield Community Centre. 10 a.m. More details in May issues.

June 16 Hollandse Dag 10:00 am at First Christian Reformed Church, 310 Kingscourt Avenue, **Kingston**, ON. Speaker: Rev. John Klomps. For info call 613-546-5615.

June 26, 27 Come celebrate the 50th anniversary of HCCS (formerly Athens Christian School). Contact www.hccs.ca or 613 498 4176.



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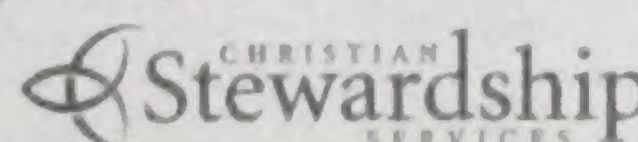


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Enjoy displays of photos and memorabilia. Come, reminisce with
 fellow classmates, teachers, board members & supporters.

We are looking forward to fellowship with you!

A **Celebration Evening** is also being planned.
 Enjoy Refreshments, Dinner, Speakers and Music.

This special event is planned for
 Saturday, May 29th
 at Calvary Pentecostal Church,
 65 Lansdowne Ave., Woodstock.

For more information on these events please contact the school
 519-539-1492.



DE HOLLANDSE DAG

word dit jaar weer gevierd op
 Woensdag 9 Junie om 10 uur
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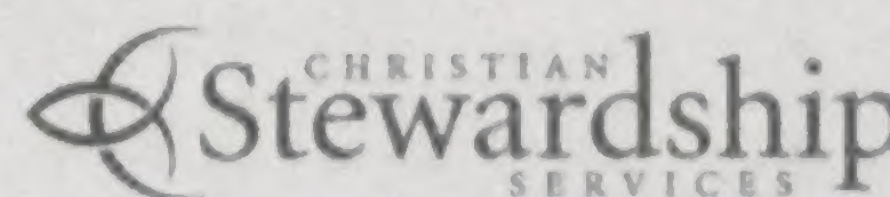
Een jaar is weer voorbij, en daarom zijn we o zo blij
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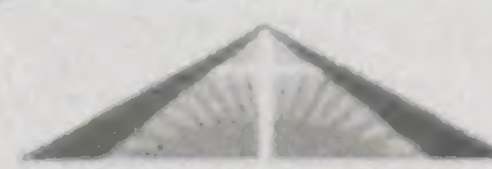
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News

Haiti diaries: Aid efforts from the front lines

Peter D. Montgomery

Many non-governmental organizations (NGOs) in Haiti have offices in the capital, so they were also hit by the quake. In spite of this, each one is doing all they can to assist their distressed neighbours. Organizations such as International Child Care (ICC) Canada, which has been in Haiti for more than 40 years, are making good use of pre-existing infrastructure and staff. Right after the quake, ICC set up emergency medical facilities on the grounds of Grace Children's Hospital and used its state-of-the-art eye clinic for emergency operations. When the international community eventually arrived with medical teams and relief workers, they provided essential services such as food, water and shelter. The United Nations has coordinated the relief effort and set up "clusters" in order to prevent overlap and to provide comprehensive coverage of the area affected.

Though the emergency is now past, a monumental task still lies ahead to rehabilitate and reconstruct this decimated country. There seems to be little or no progress being made to find semi-permanent shelters for people made homeless. Living in tents is fine as a stop-gap solution, but this is not viable during the rainy season or the hurricane season. The government of Haiti has decided to forbid all rebuilding until it has agreed on a new building code to ensure that this type of disaster will not happen again. Whether this is contributing to the inertia to get things rebuilt is hard to say. However, nothing seems to be getting rebuilt. More than two months later, people are still sleeping out on the streets.

Although the essential needs have been met, there are still serious concerns. Sanitation is an issue. Some

of the tent cities have transportable latrines but some don't. How these people are coping is anybody's guess.

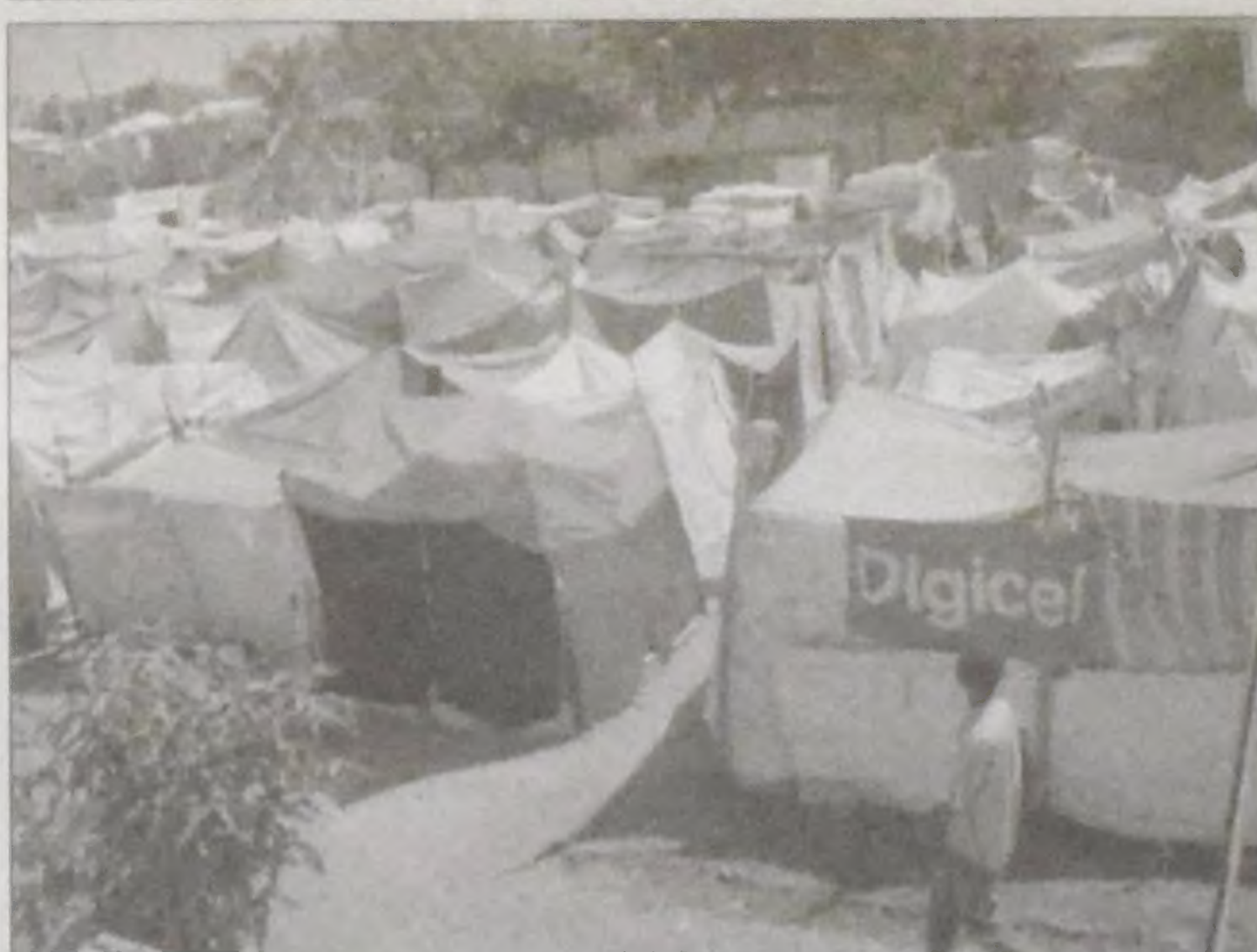
Where do we go from here? Prime Minister Harper told the world that it would take 10 years to rebuild Port au Prince. In my estimation it will be more like 15 to 20 years. The country needs a totally revised, decentralized bureaucracy in order to reduce the concentration of work in Port au Prince and to minimize corruption. Many of the main government buildings were destroyed, which should encourage this process. The safe and environmentally sound removal of rubble from the city will take years and has not even begun; the introduction of land reform which will accommodate construction of new homes and repatriation of the homeless needs to be made a priority. These are issues which previous Haitian governments have been incapable of addressing. NGOs can play their part in the rehabilitation efforts, but the major reconstruction needed for areas affected by this earthquake has to be coordinated by the Haitian government. Is the international community

committed to this long term project? Are they going to come through with the millions of dollars promised? Is the Haitian government and bureaucracy willing to change its ways and make the necessary reforms to ensure the money is used for rebuilding? Are the people of Haiti able to adjust to a new system, new work ethics, and a new national pride? These are just a few of the many questions that only time will answer.



Peter Montgomery meeting with health officials in Haiti.

Makeshift camp



Tent-city near Port-au-Prince.



New mother gave birth at ICC hospital

Peter D. Montgomery is the National Director of International Child Care (Canada). He will be traveling to Haiti again soon.

ODDS & TRENDS

Two-step, in F

Life feels different on foot.
Drivers are, in fact, driven – frustrated
by the confines of asphalt, forced into file.
I, however, am free to find a way
over the field, bovine.
I scuffle through fallen leaves; I fill up on
vistas and seasonal perfumes.
If I meet fellow travelers, face to face, I am
affable.

Form follows function; foot follows foot,
but not fascist. If my face turns toward the
rising daffodils,
I'm finished.

Tom van Milligen

Pastor of New Life Christian Reformed Church in
Guelph

Entire church staff goes executive

A church staff concerned about not showing favouritism recently added the word "executive" to every staff member's title. The Youth Pastor is now the Executive Youth Pastor. The Executive Pastor is now the Executive Executive Pastor. His secretary is the Executive Assistant to the Executive Executive Pastor. "I appreciate the title upgrade," says the Executive Nursery Coordinator, formerly just the Nursery Coordinator. "It makes me feel more professional." But the Executive Executive Secretary to the Executive Senior Pastor – the top man at the church – says the church is now concerned that people with double "Executive's" in their titles may be seen as unfairly advantaged. "We may have to do some more tinkering with the titles," she says.

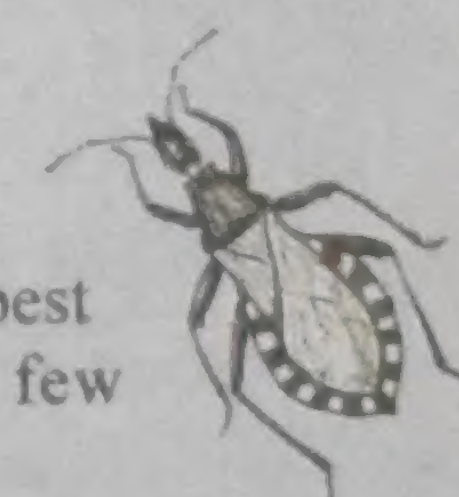
— from Larknews.com, a satirical source of Christian news.

No bug left behind

A fruit growers' magazine recently asked its subscribers "How has your approach to pest control changed in the last few years?" Here is one reply:

"Our approach to pest control has changed considerably in the last few years. In the old days, we simply handed each worker two blocks of wood, aimed them toward the orchards with instructions to bring the blocks together sharply if a bug landed on one of them. Now, the first thing we do is to move freshly serviced portable toilets and filled portable hand-washing facilities to the orchards. After that, we issue each worker a hard hat, safety glasses, vinyl gloves and two blocks of freshly cut wood from organically grown lumber, with instructions to bring the blocks together sharply if a bug happens to land on one. Then, the workers are required to record the date, time of day, species of bug and direction that it was facing – north, south, east or west – and when it was squashed. These records are kept for six years and are available to the EPA, USDA, IRS, FEMA, Homeland Security, local health departments and any Ph.D. candidate who needs the information for his thesis."

—from Fruit Grower's News.



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